VOLTAIRE'S

Fragments on India

Translated by

FREDA BEDI

★ Buried in Voltaire's collected works never published separately since its appearance in French, this is no ordinary book of history but a notable human document interesting to everybody. This unique book of historical comment is available for the first time. Mrs. Bedi's translation is vivid, and in Voltaire's spirit.

Voltaire, famous historian, philosopher, satirist, dipped his pen in bitter ink...... His observations on the early days of the French and English India Companies are typical of his best style are all there, and over and above that is Voltaire's amazing interest in people not as symbols but as personalities.

LION PRESS - LAHORE

VOLTAIRE

FRAGMENTS ON INDIA

TRANSLATED BY

FREDA BEDI, B. A. Hons. (Oxon.)

◊◊

LION PRESS - LAHORE

FIRST PUBLISHED FEBRUARY, 1937

Printed at the Ripon Printing Press, Bull Road, Lahore by Mirza Muhammad Sadiq and Published by Freda Bedi, for Contemporary India Publications, Model Town, Lahore (India)

FOREWORD

IT was in 1934 that my husband, studying for his thesis brought home from the Oriental Section of the State Library in Berlin, a small, yellowed, calf-bound volume called ***Fragments sur l'Inde***. It had been printed before the end of the eighteenth century, and was full of discrepancies of text and printing errors. The only indication of its authorship was a pencilled word 'Voltaire' written on the back fly leaf. Investigation proved that it was a work of Voltaire, but one which had been so much neglected that no bibliography on India could be found containing a reference to it. In French, the book is not easily available in its separate form, and, since few have the energy to search the volumes of a writer's collected works, it is not generally known. The only scholar I met during the year who knew anything about it was a charming Jesuit Father who had been teaching in Bombay, and he was naturally not enthusiastic since the book, being Voltaire's, contained some acid references to saints and established religion.

In translating it, I have been animated not so much by a scholarly desire to add to the knowledge of the world, as by a wish to share the book with others who may find it as fascinating as I did. Had I lived in Paris or in London, rather than in the heart of the Land of the Five Rivers, I might perhaps have made a book of more academic value, and had a greater personal satisfaction in so doing. But a hard political and journalistic life does not allow me such luxuries. Instead, I have presented the book in the way I hope it will be read—as an intensely personal and acute summary of Indian affairs in the eighteenth century from the pen of a brilliant Frenchman and a brilliant satirist.

The book is, I believe, not valuable so much because it is new evidence on contemporary history, since Voltaire has used many second-hand sources, and acknowledged them, but more because it is an interpretation of Indian events by one of the most acute thinkers and social rebels of his time. He was not a

man to be deceived by the usual Imperialist humbug and clap-trap, which was not so very different then from what it is now; to a clear head he added a shrewd knowledge of human psychology and a sort of rebellious common-sense. His remarks on the economic basis of Imperialism have an almost modern flavour, if we discount the touches of local colour:

"It is in order to provide the tables of the citizens of Paris, of London, and of other big towns with more spices than used to be consumed at one time at Princes' tables; it is in order to load simple citizens' wives with more diamonds than queens used to wear at their coronation; it is in order to infect their nostrils with a disgusting powder, to drink deep, because the fancy took them, of certain useless liqours unknown to our fathers, that a huge trade was carried on, always disadvantageous to three-quarters of Europe; and it is in order to keep up this trade that the Powers made a war on each other, in which the first cannon shots fired in our climes set fire to all the batteries in America and in the heart of Asia."

Voltaire's treatment of his characters has a vitality often lacking in a purely historical narrative. His Lalli is a tragic, rather pitiable, figure and he seems to have a literary interest in making us understand the human side of his character. There has been a conscious dramatization of his personality and final death, as though he were the central character of a novel rather than a sober General indicted for his sins. It is this which makes the book what it is—a somewhat inaccurate but fascinating account of the early days of European Imperialism in India. We can forgive his inaccuracies for the sake of his wit!

FREDA BEDI.

MODEL TOWN
LAHORE
February 1937.

CONTENTS

Contents

VOLTAIRE

Fragments on India

Chapter I

Historical Picture of Indian Trade

Impiger extremos curris, mercator ad Indos,
Per mare, pauperiem fugiens, per faxa, per ignes.
—*Hor. Epist. Lib. I.**

AS soon as India became a little known to the barbarians of the West and the North, she became the object of their cupidity. This was all the more so when these barbarians, becoming civilized and industrious, created new needs for themselves.

It is well known that the seas surrounding the Equator and the East of Africa were hardly passed than there was fighting against the twenty peoples of India, of whose existence there had before been no knowledge. The Portuguese and their successors were only able to provide pepper and cloth to Europe by means of slaughter.

The peoples of Europe only discovered America in order to lay it waste and sprinkle it with blood, in return for which they obtained cocoa, indigo, and sugar, the canes of which were transported from Europe into the hot climate of this new world. They brought back some other commodities—above all quinine—but they contracted there a disease which is as terrible as it is shameful and universal, and which this bark of a tree in Peru did not cure. †

As for the gold and silver in Peru and Mexico, the people did not gain anything therefrom, because it is just the same whether one procures for oneself the same necessities with a hundred marks,

* This passage from Horace's Epistles may be translated thus: "You hasten, as a merchant, to India's furthest bounds, fleeing from poverty over seas, over rocks, through burning heat." (*Trans.*)

† There is a legend that the first explorers brought back venereal disease from South America. (*Trans.*)

or with one mark. It would even be very advantageous to the human race if it had very little metal which could serve as medium of exchange, because then trade is much easier. This truth is demonstrated with great force. The first possessors of the mines are, truly speaking, richer in the beginning than the others, having more of the medium of exchange in their hands, but the other peoples soon sell them goods at a proportionate price: in a very short time equality is established, and in the end the most industrious people actually become the richest.

Everybody knows what a huge and happy empire the Kings of Spain acquired at the two ends of the earth, without going out of their palaces; how Spain brought gold and silver and precious merchandise into Europe without becoming any richer thereby; and to what point she extended her dominion at the cost of depopulation.

The history of the great Dutch establishments in India is known, as is also that of the English colonies which stretch to-day from Jamaica to Hudson's Bay—that is to say, from the neighbourhood of the tropics to that of the Pole.

The French who came in late at the partition of the two worlds lost, in the war of 1756 and the peace, all their territorial acquisitions in North America, where they possessed an area fifteen hundred leagues in length and seven to eight hundred leagues in breadth. This huge and poor country was a great burden on the State, and its loss was even more disastrous.

Almost all these vast domains, these extravagant establishments, all these wars undertaken to maintain them, were the result of the love of ease in the towns and the greed of the merchants, even more than of the ambition of rulers.

It is in order to provide the tables of the citizens of Paris, of London and of other big towns with more spices than used to be consumed at one time at Princes' tables; it is in order to load simple citizens' wives with more diamonds than queens used to wear at their coronation; it is in order to infect their nostrils with

a disgusting powder* to drink deep, because the fancy took them, of certain useless liquors unknown to our fathers, that a huge trade was carried on, always disadvantageous to three-quarters of Europe; and it is in order to keep up this trade that the Powers made a war on each other, in which the first canon shots fired in our climes sets fire to all the batteries in America and in the heart of Asia. We always complain of taxes, and often very rightly, but we have never considered how the greatest and the harshest tax is that which we impose on ourselves by our new delicacies of taste which have become needs, and which are in reality a ruinous luxury, although they have not been given the name of luxury.

It is very true that, since Vasco de Gama who rounded for the first time the Cape of the land of the Hottentots, it is the merchants who have changed the face of the world.

The Japanese, who have experienced the turbulent and greedy restlessness of some of our European nations, were fortunate and powerful enough to close to them all their ports, and only admit each year one ship of a minor nation, whom they treat with such harshness and scorn† that only this small nation is able to bear it, although it is very powerful in Eastern India. The inhabitants of the vast Indian peninsula have not had this power, nor have they had the good fortune of keeping themselves, like the Japanese, safe from foreign invasions. Their maritime provinces have been, for more than two hundred years, the theatre of our wars.

The successors of the Brahmans, of these inventors of so many arts, of these lovers and arbiters of peace, have become our agents, our paid negotiators. We have laid waste their country, we have manured it with our blood. We have shown how much we surpass them in courage and in wickedness, and how inferior we are to them in wisdom. Our European nations have killed themselves in this very land where we went only to get rich, and where the early Greeks only travelled for knowledge.

* *I.e.*, Snuff. (*Trans.*)

† It is absolutely true that at the beginning of the 1738 revolution the Dutch, like others, were compelled to walk on the Crucifix. (*V.*)

The Dutch India Company was already making rapid progress, and that of England was being formed, when in 1604 Henry the Great gave, in spite of the advice of the Duc de Sulli, the exclusive right of trading in India to a company of merchants more selfishly interested than rich and incapable of supporting themselves by their own efforts. They were only given Letters Patent, and they remained inactive.

Cardinal Richelieu created in 1642 a sort of India Company, but it was ruined in a few years. These attempts seemed to show that the French character was not as fitted for these enterprises as the alert and economical character of the Dutch, or the daring, enterprising and persevering character of the English.

Louis XIV, who sought the glory and the gain of his country by all methods, founded in 1664, at the instance of the immortal Colbert, a powerful India Company, to which he granted the most useful privileges, and which he aided with four millions from his exchequer, which would be equivalent to eight millions to-day. But, from year to year, the capital and the credit of the Company declined. The death of Colbert destroyed practically everything. The town of Pondicheri, on the Coromandel coast, was taken by the Dutch in 1693. A colony established in Madagascar was completely ruined.

The principal cause, it was believed, of the complete destruction of trade before the loss of Pondicheri was the greed of some of the administrators in India, their continual jealousies, the selfish interests which are always in conflict with the common weal, and the vanity which prefers, as it used to be said, "the appearance to the reality"—a fault often held against our nation.

We have seen with our own eyes in 1719 with what amazing prestige a new Company was born again from the ashes of the old. The fantastic system of Lass, which ruined everybody, and which brought the greatest misfortunes to France, did however revive the spirit of trade. The edifice of the India Company was re-built with the debris of this system. It seemed at first to be as flourishing as the Batavia Company; but it was only actually so in big preparations, in magazines, in fortifications, in expensive

apparatus, either in Pondicheri or in the town and the port of the East in Brittany, which was conceded to it by the French Ministry, and which corresponded to its capital in India. It had an imposing appearan e, but as for real profit, made by trade, it never made any. It did not give back in sixty years a single dividend in return for its goods. It did not pay any of its employees or any of its debts in France except the nine millions that the King gave yearly for the farming of tobacco : so that it was really the King who paid for it.

There were a few military officers in this Company, a few industrious agents who acquired riches in India: but the Company was ruining itself spectacularly while individuals were amassing treasure. It is not human nature to exile oneself, to travel to a people whose customs are quite the contrary to our own, whose language is difficult to learn and impossible to speak well, to expose one's health to a climate to which one is not born; in short to work for the fortune of the merchants in the capital, without having the strong desire to make one's own. This has been the reason of many disasters.

Chapter II

The beginning of the first troubles of India and the enmities between the French and English Companies

TRADE, this first link between men, having become an object of warfare and a reason for devastation, the first mandatories of the English and French Companies, paid by their employers under the name of Governors, soon became Army Generals of a kind,—they would have been taken in India for Princes, for they made war as much on each other as with the Sovereigns of these provinces.

GOVERNMENT OF THE MOGHUL.

Everyone who is quite well-informed knows that the Moghul government was, since Chenghiz Khan and possibly a long time before that, a feudal government—almost the same as that in Germany, the same as remained for long with the Lombards, with the Spanish, as it was in England as well as France, and in practically all the States of Europe: it is the ancient administration of all the conquering Scythians and Tartars who have poured forth their invading hordes into the world. One cannot understand how the author of "The Spirit of Laws" * could say that "feudalism is an event which happened once on this earth and which will perhaps never happen again." Feudalism is not an event: it is a very ancient form of government, which exists in three-quarters of our hemisphere with different administrations. The Grand Moghul is like the German Emperor. The Soubaidars are the Princes of the Empire become sovereigns each in their separate provinces. The Nawabs are the possessors of big under-fiefs. These Soubaidars and Nawabs are of Tartar origin and Muslim religion. The Rajas, who also enjoy big fiefs, are for the most part of Indian origin, and of the ancient religion

* Montesquieu. (*Trans.*)

of the Brahmans. These Rajas possess provinces less important in character and have far less power than the Nawabs and the Soubaidars. All stories from India confirm this fact.

These Princes were seeking to destroy each other and everything was in turmoil in these lands since the year 1739 of our era, that memorable year in which Nadir Shah, having first of all protected the Emperor of Persia, his master, and then having afterwards pulled out his eyes, came to ravage the North of India and seize the very person of the Grand Moghul. We shall speak in its place of this big revolution. Then it was a question as to who would pounce upon the provinces of this vast Empire, which were falling into dissolution themselves. All these Viceroys, Soubaidars, and Nawabs were quarrelling over the ruins; and these Princes, who had before disdained in their pride to admit French negotiators into their presence, now had recourse to them. The French and English India Companies, or rather their agents, were turn by turn the allies and the enemies of these Princes. The French had at first striking success under Governor Dupleix, but soon after the English had a more lasting one. The French could not consolidate their prosperity, and in the end the English abused theirs. This is a summary of what happened.

Chapter III

Summary of the actions of La Bourdonnaye and Dupleix.

IN the War of the Austrian Succession of 1741, rather like the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701, the English soon took the side of Maria Theresa, the Queen of Hungary, later Empress. As soon as the rupture broke out between France and England, they had to fight with each other, as was always the case, in America and in India.

Paris and London are rivals in Europe: Madras and Pondicheri are even more so in Asia, because these two trading towns are nearer one another, both situated in the same province, called Arcot, eighty thousand paces one from the other, both carrying on the same commerce, but divided by religion, by jealousy, by interests, and by a natural antipathy. This poison, brought from Europe, grows more widespread and stronger on the shores of India.

Those Europeans who go naturally to destroy themselves in climates such as these, always do it with only the smallest means. Their armies are rarely as much as fifteen hundred effectives, come from France or England—the remainder is composed of Indians who are called Sepoys, and of blacks, former inhabitants of the Islands, transplanted since time immemorial on the Continent, or bought a little while ago in Africa. Paucity of resources often acts as a spur to genius. Enterprising men, who would have died unknown in their fatherland, find places and positions for themselves in these far countries, where industry is rare and necessary. One of these daring geniuses was Mahé de la Bourdonnaye, a native of Saint Malo, the Duguetrouin of his time, superior to Duguetrouin in intelligence and his equal in courage. He had been useful to the India Company on more than one journey, and even more to himself. One of the Directors asked him how he had carried on his own business better than

that of the Company. "It is," he said, "because I have followed your instructions in the things concerning you, and when my own interests were involved, I only followed my own." Having been nominated by the King Governor of the Ile de Bourbon, with full powers, although in the name of the Company, he armed ships at his own cost, made sailors, raised soldiers, disciplined them, traded successfully at the point of the sword—in a word, he created the Ile de Bourbon. He did more. He dispersed an English squadron in the Indian Ocean, a thing which only he has been able to do, and which has not been repeated since.

La Bourdonnaye takes Madras in Sept. 1746.

In the end, he laid siege to Madras, and forced this important town to capitulate. The definite instructions of the French Ministry were not to keep any conquest in actual land. He obeyed. He allowed the conquered to buy back their town for about nine million francs, and so served the King his master, and the Company. In these parts, nothing was ever more useful or more full of glory. One may add that, for the honour of La Bourdonnaye, during this expedition he treated the vanquished with a politeness, a gentleness, and a magnanimity which the English praised. They respected and loved their conqueror. We are only repeating what the English said who came back from Madras, and they had no interest in disguising the truth. When foreigners respect an enemy, it seems that they tell their compatriots to render him justice.

The Governor of Pondicheri, Dupleix, condemned this restoration; he dared to nullify it by a resolution of the Council of Pondicheri and kept Madras, in spite of the integrity of treaties and the laws of every nation. He accused La Bourdonnaye of treachery: he painted him to the French Court and the Directors of the Company as a prevaricator who had demanded too small a ransom and received presents which were too big. Directors and shareholders joined their complaints to these accusations. Men in general are like dogs who bark when they hear other dogs barking in the distance.

Imprisoned in the Bastille as a Reward.

At last, the Ministry of Versailles having been stirred to action by the cries of Pondicheri, the conqueror of Madras, the

only man who had upheld the honour of the French flag, was imprisoned in the Bastille by *lettre de cachet*. He languished in this prison for three years and a half, without being able to enjoy the consolation of seeing his family. At the end of this time, the Commissioners of the Council who were given to him as judges were forced by evidence of the truth, and out of respect for his great deeds, to declare him innocent. M. Bertin, one of his judges, who has since become Minister of State, was the man whose fairness was the principal cause of his life being saved. A few enemies, still provoked by his fortune, his deeds and his ability, wanted his death. They were soon satisfied: he died on leaving the prison of a cruel disease that the prison had caused. This was the reward of memorable service rendered to his country.

Governor Dupleix excused himself in his memoirs as having received secret orders from the Ministry. But he could not have received six thousand leagues away orders concerning a victory just won, and which the French Ministry could never have foreseen. If these disastrous orders were given prophetically, they were contradictory in form to those which La Bourdonnaye had brought. The Ministry would have had to reproach itself not only with the loss of nine millions, of which France was deprived when the restoration of the town was revoked, but also with the cruel treatment with which it rewarded the genius, the courage and the magnanimity of La Bourdonnaye.

DUPLEIX SAVES PONDICHERI IN 1748.

M. Dupleix made amends for his terrible mistake and this public misfortune by defending Pondicheri for forty-two days in open trenches against two English Admirals assisted by a local Nawab. He acted as general, engineer, artillery man, and munition manager; his care, his activity and his industry coupled with the intelligence and bravery of M. de Bussy, a distinguished officer, saved the town on this occasion. M. de Bussy was serving at that time in the forces of the Company, as a member of the India Battalion. He had come from Paris to find glory and a fortune on the Coromandel coast. He found them both. The French Court rewarded Dupleix by decorating him with the Grand Cordon Rouge and the title of Marquis.

The French and English faction, the former having kept its trading capital, the latter having lost it, became more and more intimate with these Nawabs and these Soubaidars of whom we have spoken. We have said that the Empire had become chaotic. These Princes, being always at war against one another, divided themselves between the French and the English. There was a succession of civil wars in the Peninsula.

We shall not enter here into the details of their enterprises ; enough has been written of their quarrels, the treacheries of Nasir Jung's followers, and those of Muzaffar Jung,* their intrigues, their battles, and their assassinations.

Unique action of an Officer called La Touche.

We have the diaries of the sieges of twenty places unknown in Europe, badly fortified, badly attacked and badly defended: that is not our object. But we cannot pass over in silence the action of a French officer named de la Touche, who with only three hundred soldiers, penetrated at night into the camp of one of the biggest princes in these parts, killed twelve hundred of his men without losing more than three soldiers, and by this unheard-of success dispersed an army of nearly sixty thousand Indians, reinforced by some English troops. Such a happening shows us that the inhabitants of India are not any more difficult to conquer than were those of Mexico and Peru. It shows us how easy it was to conquer this country for the Tartars and those who had subjugated it before that time.

1748

Old manners and customs have been preserved in these parts as has also clothing: everything is different from us, there nature and art are not the same. Among us, after a big battle, the conquering soldiers do not have a penny increase in their pay. In India, after a short battle, the Nawabs gave millions to the European troops who had taken their side. Chanda Sahib,† one of the princes under the protection of M. Dupleix, made a present to the troops of about two hundred thousand francs, and land

*Or, as Voltaire writes, "Nazerzingues, Mouzaferzing."
†According to Voltaire, "Chandazaeb."

bringing in nine to ten thousand pounds in income to their Commander, the Comte d'Auteuil. The Soubaidar Muzaffar Jung on another occasion had twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds distributed to the little French army, and gave the same amount to the Company. M. Dupleix had also a pension of a hundred thousand rupees (two hundred and forty thousand French pounds) which he did not enjoy for long. A workman earns three sous per day in India: a noble has enough to scatter profusely.

Dupleix, Viceroy in India in 1749.

After this, the assistant-manager of a trading Company received from the Grand Moghul the little of Nawab. The English maintained that this title was fictitious, and that it was a false pandering to vanity in order to over-awe European nations in India. If the French Governor had played such a trick, he would have done it in common with more than one Nawab and Soubaidar. False diplomas were bought at the Court in Delhi, and were received afterwards in ceremony from a man put there as a so-called Commissioner of the Emperor. But whether the Soubaidar Muzaffar Jung and the Nawab Chanda Sahib had really obtained this Imperial title for the Governor of Pondicheri, or whether it was fictitious, he made use of it openly. An agent of a trading society had become a sovereign, with sovereigns under his command! We know that Indians often treated him as King and his wife as Queen. M. de Bussy, who had distinguished himself in the defence of Pondicheri, had a dignity which cannot be better expressed than by the *title* of General of the Cavalry of the Grand Moghul. He made war and peace with the Maharattas,* a warlike people of whom we shall write more, who sold their services, sometimes to the English sometimes to the French. He made secure the thrones of the Princes created by M. Dupleix.

Recognition was proportionate to service rendered. Riches as well as honours were the reward. The greatest sovereigns in Europe have neither as much power nor as much splendour: but this fortune and this brilliance soon passed away. The English and their allies beat the French on more than one occasion. The

*Voltaire says Marates.

immense sums of money given to the soldiers by the Soubaidars and the Nawabs were partly dissipated in debauchery and partly lost in the fights, and the exchequer, the munitions and the provisions of Pondicheri were exhausted.

His Misfortune.

The small army remaining in French hands was commanded by Major Lass, nephew of the famous Lass who had done so much ill to the country, but to whom the India Company owed its being. This young Scot fought bravely against the English, but, deprived of help and food, his courage was unavailing. He took the Nawab Chanda Sahib away to an island formed by rivers, called Sri Rangam, belonging to the Brahmins. It is perhaps useful to note here that the Brahmins were the rulers of this island. We have many similar examples in Europe. One could even assert that there are examples the world over. The old Brahmins* used to be, in former times, so they say, the first rulers of India. The Brahmins,* their successors, have only kept very little of their old power. Whatever the case may be, the little French army, led by a Scot, and billetted in an Indian monastery, had neither food, nor money to buy it with. M. Lass has kept for us the letter in which M. Dupleix ordered him to take everything that it was proper to take. Only two ornaments remained, reputed to be sacred,—they were two sculptured horses, covered in silver leaf. They were taken and sold, and the Brahmins did not complain or make any protest. But the proceeds of this sale did not prevent the French troops from giving themselves up as prisoners of war to the English. They captured the Nawab Chanda Sahib for whom Major Lass was fighting, and the English Nawab, the rival of Chanda Sahib, had his head cut off. M. Dupleix accused of this barbarism the English Colonel, Lawrence, who defended himself as if it was a crying slander.

1752

As for Major Lass, released on parole and back in Pondicheri, the Governer put him in prison, because he had been as unfortunate as he had been brave. He even dared to bring a

*Voltaire makes a distinction between the Bracmanes (translated " Old Brahmins") and Brames (translated " Brahmins ") which seems to be unintelligible.

criminal suit against him, which he dared not follow up.

Pondicheri remained in want, dejection and fear, while gold medals struck in honour and in the name of the Governor were being sent to Paris. He was called back in 1753, left in 1754, and came to Paris in despair. He lodged a case against the Company. He demanded from it millions, which were contested and which it would not have been able to pay if it had owed them. We have a memoir of his in which he breathed spite against his successor, Godeheu, one of the directors of the Company. Godeheu replied to him bitterly. The memoirs of these two titled agents are more voluminous than the history of Alexander. These tedious details of human weakness are scanned over for a few days by those who are interested, and are forgotten in a short time for new quarrels, which are in their turn blotted out by others. At last Dupleix died of chagrin, caused by his greatness, his fall from power, and above all, the sad necessity of soliciting judges after having ruled. Thus the two big rivals, who had gained renown in India, La Bourdonnaye and Dupleix, both died in Paris a sad and premature death.

Those who were, by their knowledge, fitted to judge their worth, said that La Bourdonnaye had the qualities of a sailor and a warrior; and Dupleix those of an enterprising and politic prince. An English author who had written the wars of the two companies until 1755, speaks of them in this way.

M. Godeheu was as wise and peaceful a negotiator, as his predecessor had been daring in his projects and brilliant in his administration. The former Governor had only thought of gaining fame in war. The second had orders to maintain himself by peaceful means—and to come back and render an account of his deeds when a third Governor was established in Pondicheri.

It was above all necessary to raise the spirits of the Indians, exasperated by the cruelties meted out to some of their compatriots, who were dependents of the Company. A man from Malabar, called Naina, the Banker of La Bourdonnaye, had been thrown into a dungeon because he had not given evidence against him. Another man complained that money had been exacted from him. The children of another Indian, called Mondamia, ruler of a neighbouring

district, ceaselessly demanded justice for the death of their father who had been tortured to death in order to extort money from him. A thousand complaints of this nature were making the name of France hated. The new Governor treated the Indians with humanity, and negotiated a compromise with the English. He and Mr. Saunders, then Governor of Madras, established a truce in 1755, and made a conditional peace.

PEACE BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND THE ENGLISH.

The first article was that both Companies should forego Indian titles; the other articles contained rules for peaceful trade.

The truce was not rigidly observed. There are always underlings who want to wreck everything in order to make themselves necessary. Moreover, since the beginning of 1756, a new war was predicted in Europe: it was necessary to prepare for it. It is claimed that, in this interval, the greed of certain individuals reaped profit at the public expense, and that the colony of Pondicheri was like a dying man whose furniture is taken away before he is dead.

Chapter IV

The sending of Count Lalli to India. Who was this General? What were his services before this expedition?

In order to stop these abuses, and to forestall the English, whose enterprises were even more frightening, the King of France sent money and troops to India. France and England were then re-starting the war of 1576, on the pretext that an old peace treaty was very badly made. The Ministers had forgotten in this treaty to specify the boundaries of Arcadie, a miserable ice-bound country near Canada. As they were fighting in the northern deserts of America, it was also necessary to cut each other's throats in the Torrid Zone of Asia. The French Ministry nominated Count Lalli for this enterprise. He was an Irish nobleman whose ancestors had followed in France the fortune of the Stuarts, the most unfortunate house that has ever borne a crown.

Services of Count Lalli.

This officer was one of the bravest and most loyal in the service of the King of France. He bore himself bravely in the presence of the King at the Battle of Fontenoy. The King knew that he hated the English irreconcilably, as they had dethroned his former masters, and that he had saved many English officers, some of whom he had wounded. So much courage and generosity touched him. He gave him on the battle-field the Irish Regiment of Dillon, whose colonel had been killed on this memorable day ; and this regiment bore from that time the name of Lalli. The Dillons and the Lallis were allies. These two houses, long the victims of their dethroned kings, always shed their blood for France.

At the very time when Louis XV reassured his nation at the battle of Fontenoy, Charles Edward, the grandson of James the Second, was attempting a daring enterprise which he had kept secret from Louis XV himself. He crossed St. George's Channel

with only seven officers to aid him, a few arms and two thousand golden louis which he had borrowed with the intention of going to rouse Scotland in his favour merely by his presence, and making a new revolution in Great Britain. He landed in Scotland on the 15th June 1745, about a month after the battle of Fontenoy. This enterprise which finished so unhappily began with unhoped for victories. Count Lalli was the first who planned to send an army of ten thousand Frenchmen to his aid. He communicated his idea to the Marquis of Argenson, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who seized on it eagerly. Count d'Argenson, brother of the Marquis and Minister for War opposed it, but soon consented. The Duke of Richelieu was appointed general of the army which was to disembark in England at the beginning of 1746. Ice held up the sending of munitions and cannons which were being transported by canal in French Flanders. The project failed but Lalli's zeal won him regard in the Ministry, and by his courage he was judged capable of doing big things. The man who wrote these memoirs speaks with knowledge of what he is saying ; he worked with him for two months by order of the Minister and found in him courage of a headstrong kind, coupled with a gentleness of manners which his misfortunes afterwards transformed and changed into a terrible violence.

Count Lalli was decorated with the Grand Cordon of Saint Louis and made Lieutenant-General of the armies when he was sent to India. The delays which one experiences always in the smallest enterprises as well as the big ones, did not allow the squadron of Count d'Ache, which was to carry the General and help to Pondicheri, to set sail from the port of Brest before the 20th February 1757.

Instead of the three millions which M. de Sechelles, the Controller-General of Finances had promised, M. de Moras, his successor, could only give two, and even that was a good deal in the state of crisis in which France was at that time.

Of the three thousand men who were due to embark with him, they were obliged to cut down more than a thousand, and Count d'Ache only had two war ships in his squadron instead of three, with a few ships of India Company.

While the two generals Lalli and d'Ache are sailing towards their destination, it is necessary to tell readers, who wish to learn, what the state of India was at this juncture, and what were the European possessions in these parts.

Chapter V

The State of India when General Lalli was sent there

THIS huge country on either side of the Ganges is forty degrees in latitude from the Malacca islands to the borders of Kashmir, and the big Bokhara, and ninety degrees in longitude, from the boundaries of Zablistan* to those of China, which comprises states whose full extent surpasses that of France ten times, and thirty times that of England, properly speaking.† But this England which is ruler to-day over the whole of Bengal, whose possessions extend in America from the fifteenth degree right beyond the Polar Circle, which has produced Locke and Newton, and finally has preserved the advantages of liberty with those of Royalty, is, in spite of all its abuses, as superior to the peoples of India as Greece was superior to Persia in the time of Miltiade, of Aristides and of Alexander. The part over which the Grand Moghul rules or rather seems to rule, is without doubt the largest, the most populated, the most fertile and the richest. In the Peninsula, it is on this side of the Ganges that the French and the English quarrelled over spices, muslins, painted cloths, perfumes, diamonds and pearls, and that they had dared to make war on the rulers.

These Sovereigns who are, as we have already said, the Soubaidars, the premier feudal sovereigns of the Empire, only enjoyed independent authority on the death of Aurangzeb, called the Great, who was in actuality the biggest tyrant of the princes of his time, the poisoner of his father, the assassin of his brothers, and, most horrible of all, a pious man or a hypocrite, or convinced, like so many perverse individuals of all times and of all places, that the biggest crimes can be committed with impunity if expiated by the lightest show of penitence and austerity.

The provinces in which the Soubaidars reign, and where the Nawabs reign under them in their big districts, are governed very

* Voltaire writes "Iles Moluques, Cachemire, Boukarie and Sablestan."
† *I.e.* without Scotland and Ireland. (*Trans.*)

differently from the northern provinces nearer to Delhi, Agra, and Lahore, the residences of the Emperors.

We admit with regret that while wishing to find out the true history of this nation, its government, its religion and its customs, we have found no help in the compilations of our French authors. Neither the writers who have written out stories for booksellers, nor our missionaries, nor our travellers have told us the truth—with few exceptions. It is a long time since we dared to refute these authors on the basis of Indian Government. It is something which is of importance to every nation in the world. They believed that the Emperor was the master of the property of all his subjects and that no man, from Kashmir to Cape Cormorin, had any private property.

VERY UNTRUE THAT THERE IS NO PRIVATE PROPERTY IN INDIA.

Bernier, philosopher though he was, wrote this to the Controller-General, Colbert. It would have been an imprudent and dangerous thing to speak thus to the administrator of an absolute monarch, if the King and the Minister had not been generous and wise. Bernard was mistaken like the Englishman, Thomas Roe. Both were dazzled by the pomp of the Grand Moghul and his despotism, and imagined that all lands belonged to him personally because that Sultan gave away fiefs for life. It is just the same as saying that the Grand Master of Malta is the proprietor of all the Commanderships to which he nominates followers in Europe: it is the same as saying that the Kings of France and Spain are the owners of all the lands they govern, and that all the ecclesiastical benefices are theirs. This same mistake which is prejudicial to the human race has been repeated a hundred times about the Turkish Government, and emanated from the same source. There has been confusion between the military benefices given and taken back by the Grand Ruler, and the father's property. It was enough that a Greek monk said it first: a hundred writers have repeated it.

In our sincere desire to find out the truth, and to be a little useful, we thought that the best thing we could do would be to refer to Mr. Holwell, who lived for so long in Bengal, and who

not only knew the language of the country, but also that of the ancient Brahmans; to consult Mr. Dow who had written of the revolutions of which he was a witness; and above all to believe that brave officer Mr. Scrafton, who unites love of letters with liberty, and who has served a great deal with Clive during his conquests. Here are the true words of this worthy citizen : they are decisive :

" I see with surprise very many authors assert that possession of land is not hereditary in this country and that the Emperor is the universal inheritor. It is true that there are no Acts of Parliament in India, no intermediate power which can hold the imperial authority legally within its limits, but the sacred and invariable custom of all the courts is that every man inherits from his father. This unwritten law is more rigidly observed than in any monarchical state."*

We may dare to add that if the people were the slaves of a single man (which has been claimed, and which is impossible) the land of the Moghul would soon have been deserted. There are there about one hundred and ten million inhabitants. Slaves do not multiply like this. Look at Poland. The cultivators and most of the middle classes have been until now glebe serfs, slaves of the nobles. There is one noble whose lands are completely depopulated.

In the Moghul's domains, distinction must be made between the conquering people and the conquered, even more than must be made between the Tartars and the Chinese. For the Tartars, who have conquered India up to the Kingdom of Ava and Pegu, have preserved the Muslim religion; while the other Tartars who subjugated China, have adopted the laws and customs of the Chinese.

All the old inhabitants of India have remained faithful to the cult and customs of the Brahmins; customs consecrated by time and which are, without doubt, the most ancient thing we know of on this earth.

* P. 26 of Scrafton's book.

OLD ARABS IN INDIA.

There is also another race of Muhammadans in India; it is that of the Arabs who, about two hundred years after Muhammad, reached the coast of Malabar. They conquered with ease this land which from Goa to Cape Comorin is a garden of delights, inhabited then by a peaceful and innocent people, equally incapable of doing violence or of defending themselves. They crossed the mountains which separate the Coromandel district from that of Malabar and which are the cause of the monsoons. It is that chain of mountains which is to-day inhabited by the Maharattas.

These Arabs who soon penetrated as far as Delhi, gave a race of Sovereigns to a large part of India. This race was subjugated by Tamerlaine, as well as the original inhabitants of the country. It is believed that a part of these Arabs settled down then in the province of Kandhar and mingled with the Tartars. This Kandhar is the old country called Parapomise by the Greeks, who never called any people by their right name. It is through this route that Alexander entered India. The Orientals claimed that he founded the town of Kandhar. They say that it is an abbreviation of Alexander, whom they called Iscandar. We always find that this unique man founded more towns in seven or eight years than other conquerers have destroyed; that he went however from victory to victory, and that he was young.

It is also through Kandhar that Nadir passed in our times—a shepherd, a native of Khorasan, who became King of Persia, and after ravaging his country came to ravage the north of India.

These Arabs of whom we speak to-day are known by the name of Pathans, because they founded the town of Patna near Bengal.

Our European merchants who were very ignorant, called all these Muhammadan peoples vaguely "Moors". This mistake arises from the fact that the first whom we have known in the past were those who came from Morocco* to conquer Spain, a part of the

*Voltaire says "Mauritanie".

southern provinces of France, and some districts in Italy. Almost all peoples from China to Rome, victors and vanquished, robbers and robbed, have mingled with each other.

We call the real Indians " Gentous ",† from the old word Gentiles, Gentes,‡ which the first Christians called the rest of the world who were not of their secret religion. Thus all names and all things have always changed. The customs of the conquerors have changed in the same way. The Indian climate has enervated nearly all of them.

† *I.e.* " Hindus ". (*Trans.*)
‡ Latin " Races ". (*Trans.*)

Chapter VI

The Hindus and their most remarkable customs

THOSE ancient Indians whom we call Hindus are in Moghul domains about one hundred millions in number (Mr. Scrafton assures us). This huge multitude is a fatal proof that a big number is easily dominated by a small. These uncountable flocks of peace-loving Hindus who gave up their liberty to a few bands of brigands did not, however, give up their religion and their customs. They have preserved the ancient cult of Brama. It is so, they say, because the Muhammadans have never cared to direct their souls and have been content to be their masters.

Their four ancient castes still exist in all the rigour of a law which separates them one from another and with all the force of first prejudices strengthened by many centuries. It is known that the first is the Brahman caste who used to govern the Empire long ago; the second are the Warriors; the third are the Agriculturists; the fourth the Merchants. Those called the Hallacores (Untouchables) or Parias, given the most degraded work, are not counted. They are regarded as impure; they themselves think they are, and would never dare to eat with a man of another caste, or touch him, or even approach him.

It is probable that the institution of these four castes was imitated by the Egyptians; because it is really quite probable, or rather certain, that only a long time after India could Egypt have been peopled and cultured in a small way. Centuries were necessary to control the Nile, to divide it into canals, to raise buildings above its floods; while the land of India spread out before man all the help necessary for life, as we have said and proved elsewhere.

Chapter VII

The Brahmans

ALL the grandeur and all the misery of human existence unfolds itself in the story of the old Brahmans, and the new Brahmans, their successors. On one side, there is a persevering goodness of soul, maintained by a rigorously abstemious life; a sublime philosophy, though a fantastic one, veiled by ingenious allegories; a horror of the shedding of blood; a constant kindliness towards man and beast. On the other side, there is the most despicable superstition. This fanaticism, although peaceful, has led them to encourage, for innumerable centuries, the voluntary death of many young widows who have thrown themselves on the blazing funeral pyres of their husbands. This horrible excess of religion and greatness of soul still exists side by side with the famous profession of faith of the Brahmans *that God only desires of us charity and good works*. The whole world is ruled by contradictions.

Mr. Scrafton adds that they are of the opinion that God wished that different nations should have different religious cults. This opinion might lead to indifference; they have, however, just as much enthusiasm for their religion as if they believed it to be the only true one, and the only one given by God himself.

The majority of them live an easy life of apathy. Their big maxim, drawn from their old books is *that it is better to sit than to walk, better to lie than to sit, better to sleep than to be awake, and better to die than to be alive*. There are, however, many to be seen on the Coromandel coast who rise out of this lethargy in order to throw themselves into an active life. Some take the part of the French, others take the part of the English: they learn the language of these foreigners and act as their interpreters and courtiers. There is hardly a big merchant on this coast who has not got his Brahman as he has his banker. On the whole, they are found to be faithful, but sharp-witted and cunning. Those who

have had no tradings with the foreigners have kept, it is said, the pure goodness of soul that is attributed to their ancestors.

THE AMAZING LEARNING OF THE BRAHMANS AT THE TIME OF THEIR DECADENCE

Mr. Scrafton and others have seen, in the hands of some Brahmans, astronomical tables made by themselves in which eclipses are calculated for many millions of years. There are therefore in their midst good mathematicians and learned astronomists; but at the same time they practice a ridiculous "legal" astrology, and they push this extravagant belief as far as the Chinese and the Persians. The man who wrote these memoirs has sent to the king's library the "Cormovedan," an old commentary on the Vedas. It is filled with predictions for every day of the year, and of religious principles for every hour. We should not be surprised about it : only two hundred years ago the same madness possessed all our princes and the same charlatanism was affected by our astronomers. The Brahmans, who possessed these tables, must be very learned. They are philosophers and priests, like the old Brahmans; they say that the people needs to be deceived and needs to be ignorant. As a result, they say that the knots of the moon in which eclipses occur, and which the old Brahmans designated by heiroglyphics of the head and the tail of a dragon, are really the efforts of a dragon who attacks the moon and the sun. The same inept version is believed in China. There are in India millions of men and women who bathe in the Ganges during an eclipse and who make a huge noise with all kinds of instruments in order to make the dragon loosen his hold. It is like this, more or less, that the earth has been governed for a long time, and in every way.

Moreover, more than one Brahman has negotiated with the missionaries in the interest of the East India Company, but the question of religion has never risen between them.

Other missionaries (it must be mentioned) have hastened on their arrival in India to write that the Brahmans worshipped the Devil, but that soon they would all be converted to the Christian faith. It is said that these monks from Europe have never tried

to convert even a single Brahman, and that no Indian ever worshipped the Devil, whom he did not know. The orthodox Brahmans conceived an inexpressible horror of our monks, when they saw them eating meat, drinking wine, and holding confession with young girls at their knees. If their customs seem to us ridiculous aspects of idolatry, our customs appears crimes to them.*

What ought to be even more astonishing to us is that in no book of the old Brahmans, any more than in those of the Chinese, nor in the fragments of the Sanconiaton, nor in those of Berose, nor in the Egyptian Manethon, nor with the Greeks, nor with the Tuscans, is to be found the least trace of the sacred History of the Jews which is our sacred history. Not a single word about Noah, whom we hold to be the saviour of the human race ; not a single word about Adam, whom we believe to be the father of it; nothing of his first descendents. How was it possible that nobody should have handed down to posterity a single action or a single word of these ancestors ? Why have so many ancient nations remained in ignorance about it, and why does a little and new nation know of it ? This miracle will require some attention if we have the hope of elucidating it. The whole of India, China, Japan, Tartary and three quarters of Africa do not yet know that Cain existed, or Canaan, Jared or Methusalah who lived nearly a thousand years. And other nations only became familiar with these names after Constantine. But these questions which belong to the realm of philosophy are strangers to history.

* One of the big Jesuit missionaries, called Lalane, wrote in 1709: One cannot doubt that the Brahmans are not real idolaters, since they worship strange gods. (Book 10, page 14 of the *Lettres Edifiantes.*)

And he says (page 15) : *Here is one of their prayers that I have translated word for word* :

" I adore the Being who is not subject either to change or inequity ; the Being whose nature is indivisible ; the Being whose perfect spirituality does not admit of being composed of qualities ; the Being who is the origin and the cause of all beings, and who surpasses them all in excellence, the Being who is the upholder of the Universe and who is the source of the Triple Power."

That is what a missionary calls idolatry !

Chapter VIII

The warriors of India and the recent revolutions

THE Hindus, as a whole, do not appear to be any more made for war, in their lovely climate, and in their religious principles, than the Laplanders in their frozen country and the " primitives " called Quakers, by the principles they have made for themselves. We have seen that the race of the conquering Muhammadans has nothing Tartar in it, and has become Indian with the passage of time.

NADIR SHAH OVERTURNS THE INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

These descendents of the conquerors of India, with a huge army, could not resist Nadir Shah when he came in 1739 to attack, with an army of forty thousand fierce brigands from Kandhar and Persia, more than six hundred thousand men whom Muhammad Shah pitted against him. Mr. Cambridge tells us who these six hundred thousand warriors were. Every horseman, accompanied by two servants, wore a light and trailing robe of silk. The elephants were decorated as though for a festival. A huge number of women followed the army. There was in the camp as big a number of shops and goods as in Delhi. The very sight of Nadir Shah's army was enough to disperse this ridiculous pomp and show. Nadir bathed Delhi in blood and fire : he carried away to Persia all the treasures of this powerful and wretched emperor, and despised him sufficiently to leave him his crown.

Certain stories tell us, and certain historians tell us again from these stories, that a Fakir stopped the horse of Nadir Shah on his march to Delhi, and that he cried out to the Prince " If you are God, take us as your victims ; if you are man, spare us as men ;" and that Nadir Shah replied " I am not God, but he whom God has sent to chastise the nations of the earth."*

*A story like this was told of Fernand Cortes, of Tamerlaine, of Attila, who according to the historians, called himself " the scourge of God ". Nobody ever called himself a " scourge ". The Jesuits used to call Pascal " the door of hell ", but Pascal

The treasure, with which Nadir contented himself, and which was of no use to him, as he was assassinated a short time afterwards by his nephew, amounted, we are told, to more than fifteen hundred millions in French money, according to the present value of our currency. What became of these immense riches ? Some may have passed into other hands, as new plundering took place ; the rest may have been hidden by the fearful and the avaricious in some hole or other : Persia and India have both been the most unfortunate countries on earth, since man has always striven to change into dreadful calamities all the bounties that nature has bestowed on him. Persia and India were no more, after the victory and the death of Nadir Shah, than lands of blood and anarchy. They were both torrents of revolution.

replies to them in his "Letters" that his name is not the door of hell. Most of these adventures and these replies, attributed through the ages to so many famous men, were first of all products of the imagination of writers who wished to brighten up their novels, and are still repeated to-day by those who write histories from collected "Gazettes". *All these so-called "witticisms", and all these legends grow with recounting.* One can amuse oneself with them, but not believe them.

Chapter IX

Revolutions (continued)

A YOUNG Persian valet, who had served as mace-bearer in the household of Nadir Shah, made himself a highway robber as his master had been.

A HIGHWAY ROBBER BECOMES SOVEREIGN

He got information of a convoy of three thousand camels bearing arms, provisions, and a great amount of gold carried away from Delhi by the Persians. He killed the escort, captured the convoy, levied troops, and took possession of a whole kingdom North-East of Delhi. This kingdom used to be at one time a part of Bactriane; * its boundaries stretch on one side to the mountains of the lovely province of Kashmir, and on the other side to Kabul.

This brigand, called Abdali, was once a big Prince, a hero, who marched towards Delhi in 1746, and aimed at nothing short of conquering the whole of India. It was exactly at this time that la Bourdonnaye took Madras.

The old Mogul, Mahmoud, whose destiny it was to be oppressed by thieves, either kings or those wishing to be kings, first sent against him his Grand Vizier, under whom his grandson Ahmed Shah made his first attempts at arms. A battle was fought at the gates of Delhi. The result was indecisive, but the Grand Vizier was killed. It is said that the Umras, the commanders of the Emperor's troops, strangled their master, and spread the rumour that he had poisoned himself.

* This kingdom is called Ghisni. We have not found this name either in the maps of Vaugondi, or in our dictionaries : it did, however, exist, and is to-day dismembered.

His grandson, Ahmed Shah, succeeded him on this tottering throne—a prince who has been painted as brave but weak,* voluptuous, indecisive, untrustworthy, changeable, destined to be more unfortunate than his grandfather. A Raja called *Gasi*, who helped him and betrayed him by turns, took him prisoner and had his eyes taken out. The Emperor died as a result of this torture. The Raja *Gasi*, not being able to make himself Emperor, put in his place a descendent of Tamerlaine: that Alumgir, who has not been happier than the others. The Umras, like the *Aghas* of the Janissaries, want the race of Tamerlaine always to be on the throne, as the Turks only want a Sultan of the Ottoman race: it does not matter to them who reigns, if he is efficient or bad, provided he is a member of the family. They depose him, they gauge out his eyes, they kill him on a throne that they hold sacred. They have done it since the time of Aurengzeb.

We can imagine during these storms, how the Soubeidars, the Nawabs and the Rajas of Central India, quarrelled among themselves over the provinces they evacuated, and how the French and English factions made efforts to share the booty.

We have shown how a small band of Europeans took part in the combat or dispersed the Hindu armies. These soldiers from *Visapour*, from Arcot, from Tanjor, from Golconda, from Orissa, and from Bengal, from Cape Cormorin right to the Palm Promontary and the mouth of the Ganges, are doubtless bad soldiers: they have no military discipline, no patience in work, no loyalty to their leaders,—they are solely concerned with their pay which is always much above the salary of labourers and workmen, according to a custom directly contrary to that of Europe: neither they nor their officers ever worry themselves about the interest of the Prince they serve, they only worry about the money-bags of his treasurer. But, after all, Indians do fight Indians, and their strength or weakness is equal; their bodies which can rarely bear

*We are only looking for the truth, we do not claim to paint the portrait......either of princes or of statesmen who lived six thousand leagues away, as people take it into their heads every day to draw for us, down to the least details of character, the sovereigns, who lived two thousand years ago, and the ministers, who reigned under them or over them. The charlatanism, which is rampant everywhere, varies these pictures in a thousand ways; they make these men say things that we know they never said, harangues are attributed to them, which they have never delivered, as well as actions......which they have never done. We should find it very hard to paint a true portrait of the princes we have seen near to us, and some people want to give us those of Numa and Tarquin!

fatigue face death. Quails fight and kill themselves as well as bulldogs.

MAHRATTAS

An exception to these weak troops are those mountain people called the Mahrattas, who have stronger constitution, like all inhabitants of hilly country. They are hardier, more courageous, have a greater love of liberty than the inhabitants of the plains. These Mahrattas are precisely what the Swiss were in the wars of Charles VIII and Louis XII : whosoever could overcome them was sure of victory, and their services were highly paid. They chose a leader for themselves whom they only obey during the war, and, though they obeyed him very badly, the Europeans called this captain of the brigands " king "—such is the misuse of this word. Sometimes they fought for the Emperors ; sometimes against them. They served, turn by turn, Nawab against Nawab, and French against English.

However, one should not believe that these Mahratta Hindus, although of the Brahman religion, observe its rigorous rites : they and nearly all the soldiers eat meat and fish ; they even drink strong liquors when they find them. In every country people make their religion fit in with their desires.

These Mahrattas prevented Abdali from conquering India. Without them, he would have been a Tamerlaine or an Alexander. We have just seen the grandson of Mahmud put to death by one of his subjects. His successor, Alumgir, experienced the same revolutions in his short life and had the same fate. The Mahrattas, having declared war on him, entered Delhi, and devastated it for seven days. Abdali came back and intensified the confusion and disaster in 1757. The Emperor Alumgir, become insane, ruled and ill-treated by his Vizier, implored the protection of this very Abdali ; the indignant Vizier put his master in prison and soon afterwards cut off his head. This last catastrophe happened a few years afterwards. Our memoirs, which agree on fundamentals, disagree on dates : but what does it matter to us in what month and year an effeminate Mogul was killed in India, when so many kings were being assassinated in Europe ?

This heap of crimes and disasters, which follow each other without interruption, in the end disgusts the reader : the number of them and the distance of the places mentioned lessen the pity inspired by such calamities.

Chapter X

Description of the coasts of the Peninsula, where the French and English traded and made war

AFTER having shown who were the Emperors, the important men, the peoples, the soldiers, and the priests with whom General Lalli had to fight and negotiate, we must describe the condition of the English, against whom he was pitted, and begin by giving an idea of the establishments founded by so many European nations on the western and eastern coasts of India.

It is unfortunate that we cannot at this point put a geographical map before the eyes of the reader: it is not convenient for us to do it, neither have we the time, but whosoever wants to read these memoirs with advantage can easily consult one. If one cannot be found, he can imagine the whole coast of the Indian peninsula covered with establishments of European merchants, founded either by concessions from the inhabitants themselves or by force of arms.

STORIES OF CAMBAY

Begin on the North-East. You find first of all that you are on the coast of the Cambay peninsula, where it is claimed that men lived a communal life for two hundred years. If that were so, it must have possessed that " water of perpetual life " which has been the subject of Asian novels, or that " fountain of Youth " known in the novels of Europe. The Portugese have kept here Deo* one of their former conquests.

SURAT

At the end of the Cambay gulf is Surat, a town at present under the rule of the Grand Mogul, in which all the nations of the

* Voltaire writes " Diu (or Diou) " (Trans.).

earth had their trading centres, and above all the Armenians who are the agents of Turkey, Persia and India.

The coast of Malabar, properly speaking, begins with a little island, which belongs to the Jesuits; it still bears their name and in strange contrast, the island of Bombay, which follows, belongs to the English. This Isle of Bombay is the most unhealthy place in India, and the worst. It is, however, to preserve this island that the English fought the Nawab of Deccan who claims the sovereignty over these coasts. They must find it profitable to keep up such a sorry establishment, and we shall see how this place served as a background for one of the most amazing happenings, which have made the English respected in India.

GOA

Lower down is the little island of Goa. Every sailor says that there is no more beautiful port in the world: those of Naples or Lisbon are neither bigger nor better. The town is still a monument to the superiority of Europeans over Indians—or rather of the cannon, which these people do not know. Goa is unfortunately celebrated for its inquisition equally contrary to humanity and opposed to commerce. The Portugese monks affirmed that these people worshipped the Devil, and it was they themselves who served him.

If you go southwards, you will find Cananor which the Dutch took from the Portugese, who had seized it from its owners.

CALICUT

After that we find the ancient kingdom of Calicut which cost so much blood to the Portuguese. The kingdom is about twenty of our leagues in length and breadth. The ruler of this country called himself Zamorin, the King of Kings; and the Kings who were his vassals each possessed about five or six leagues. It was the seat of the most important trade, but now it is no longer so, and merchants do not frequent it. An Englishman, who has travelled for a long time on all these coasts confirms that this district is the most pleasant in Asia, and the climate is the healthiest; that all the trees there are evergreens and that the land is always covered

with flowers and fruits. But human greed does not send merchants to India to breathe sweet air and gather flowers.

WRITTEN LIES

A Portuguese monk wrote long ago that when the king of this country marries, he first of all asks the youngest priests to sleep with his wife ; that all the women and the queen herself can each have seven husbands ; that children do not inherit, but nephews ; and finally that all the inhabitants there make elaborate sacrifices to the Devil. These ridiculuous absurdities are repeated in twenty histories, in twenty books of geography, and in la Martinière himself. One gets angry with this crowd of historians, who write down so many stupid things of every kind in cold blood, as if it was nothing to deceive men.*

We regard it as our duty to repeat here that the first Brahmans, having invented sculpture, painting, hieroglyphics, as well as arithmetic and geometry, represented " Virtue " with the symbol of a woman, to whom they gave ten arms to fight ten monsters, who are the ten sins to which man is most subject. It was these allegorical figures that the sailors, ignorant, deceived and deceiving, took for statues of Satan and Beelzebub, old Persian names which were never known in the Peninsula.† But what would the descendents of those Brahmans say, the first teachers of the human race, if they had the curiosity to see our country,

*The famous Jesuit Tachard relates that he was told that the women of noble birth in Calicut could have as many as ten husbands at a time (volume 3 of the " Lettres Edifiantes ", page 158). Montesquieu quotes this stupid remark as if it were an article of the customs of Paris, and, what is worse, he assigns a reason for this law.

The writer of these *fragments*, having with a few friends sent a ship to India, very carefully collected information as to whether this amazing law exists in Calicut. People replied by shrugging their shoulders and laughing. Actually, how can we imagine that the most cultured people on the coast of Malabar could have a custom so contrary to that of all their neighbours, to religious laws, and to human nature ? How can we believe that a well-born man, or a soldier, could content himself with being the tenth favourite of his wife ? To whom would the children belong ? What a terrible amount of quarrels there would be and continual murders ! It would be less ridiculous to say that there is a courtyard where ten cocks share peacefully one hen. This story is as absurd as that with which Herodotus amused the Greeks when he said that all the ladies of Babylon were obliged to go to the temple to sell their favours to the first stranger who wanted to buy them. A member of Paris University wanted to justify this stupidity : he did not succeed.

† See the chapter on Brahmans.

so long uncivilized, just as we have the mad desire to go to their land for the sake of avarice !

TANOR

Tanor, which follows, is still called a kingdom by our geographers : it is a little land, four leagues by two, a house of pleasure, situated in a delightful place, to which the neighbouring people go to buy certain precious things.

CHANGANOR

Immediately afterwards comes the kingdom of Changanor, of about the same size. Most accounts say that this district is as full of kings as we see Marquises in Italy and France without the Marquisates, Counts without their "Comtés" and in Germany Barons without their Baronies.

If Changanor is a kingdom, Quilon, which is next to it, can call itself a huge Empire ; because it is roughly twelve leagues by three. The Dutch, who expelled the Portugese from the capitals of these States, established in Cranganor a trading centre of which they have made a fortress impregnable against all these kings united together. They do an immense trade at Cranganor, which is, so they say, a garden of delights.

Going always towards the equator on the coast of this peninsula, which gets narrower and narrower, the Dutch also took from the Portugese their fortress in the kingdom of Cochin, a little province, which was under the sway at one time of this "King of Kings" Zamorin of Calicut. It was nearly three centuries ago that these kings saw armed merchants from Europe establish themselves in their territories, expel each other, and take possession turn by turn of all the trade of the country, without the inhabitants of three hundred leagues of coastline ever being able to stop them.

TRAVANCORE

Travancore is the last land which ends the point of the peninsula. One is surprised at the weakness of the travellers and the missionaries who have taken out of this Kingdom the little country of Travancore, as well as these other groups of rich "villages" that we have just passed.

Even if these kingdoms had only occupied each fifty leagues along the coast, there would have been twelve hundred leagues from Surat to Cape Cormorin ; and if they had converted a hundredth part of the Indians among whom there is not a single Christian, there would be more than a million.*

THE FENNEL TREE : A UNIQUE PHENOMENON IF IT IS TRUE

Before leaving Malabar, although it is not our plan to write the natural history of this delightful country, may we be permitted to admire the cocoanut trees and the *fennel tree*. The cocoanut tree, it is well known, provides man with everything necessary for him : food and pleasant drink, clothing, house and furniture. It is the finest present of nature. The fennel tree, which is less known, produces fruits which swell and bounce under the hand which touches them. Our fennel herb, also unexplainable, has far fewer properties. This tree if we are to believe certain naturalists, reproduces itself in whatever way it is cut. It has not, however, been put in the ranks of those "Zoophyte" animals, as Leuvenhoek has put those little rushes called fresh water Polyps, which grow in some marshes, and about which many tales have been told and too easily believed. One looks for the miraculous, and it is everywhere, for the least works of nature are inexplicable. There is no need to add legends to these real mysteries which strike our eyes and which we tread under our feet.

* A Jesuit called Martin tells in the fifth volume of his " Lettres Curieuses et Edifiantes " that it is a custom near Travancore to collect a fund and distribute it every year. An Indian, it is said, made a vow to Saint Francis Xavier to give a sum of money to the Jesuits if he won in this kind of lottery. He won the biggest prize. He made a second vow, and won for the second time. However, adds the Jesuit Martin, this Indian, as well as all his compatriots, retained an unconquerable horror for the religion of the French, which they call " Franguinism ". He was ungrateful. Let us add to all these things of which the "Lettres Curieuses" are full, the miracles attributed to Saint Francis Xavier, his sermons in all the dialects of India and Japan, delivered as soon as he embarked in these countries, the nine dead that he brought to life, the two ships in which he found himself at the same time although they were a hundred leagues from one another, and which he saved from a tempest ; his crucifix which fell into the sea and which was brought back by a sea-crab ; and let us judge if such a sacred religion as ours ought to be continually mingled with such stories.

This same Martin who lived however a long time in India dares to say that there is a small people called the Kolaris, whose law is that, in their quarrels and their law-suits, the opposing party is forced to do everything that the other does. If one loses his eye, the other is forced to extract his. If a Kolari cuts his wife's throat and eats her, his opponent immediately assassinates and eats his. Mr. Orme, a learned Englishman who has seen a lot of these Kolaris, assures us in clear words, that these diabolical customs are absolutely unknown, and that Father Martin was not telling the truth.

Chapter XI

Survey of the Coast (continued)

AT last, we go round this famous Cape Cormor, or Cormorin, known to the ancient Romans since the time of Augustus, and then we reach this " Pearl coast " which is called the " fishery ". It is from there that Indian divers provided pearls to the East and the West. There were still many to be found when the Portuguese discovered and invaded this coast in the sixteenth century. Since that time, this huge branch of commerce has decreased every day, either because more easterly seas produce pearls of finer water, or because the material which makes them has changed on the shore of this Indian promontory, just as many gold and silver mines and those of other metals have been worked out it many countries.

HE FAMOUS ISLAND OF CEYLON

Next you go a little to the north of the eighth degree from the equator, where you are, and you see on your right Trapobane (or Taprobane) as the ancients knew it, called later Serindib by the Arabs and finally Ceylon.* To describe it we will only say, that the King of Portugal, Emmanuel, asked one of his ship's captains who was returning from there if it merited its reputation. The officer answered him : " I saw there a sea sown with pearls, coasts covered with ambergris, forests of ebony and cinnamon, mountains of rubies, caverns of rock crystal—and I am bringing them to you in my ship." What a reply ! and he was not exaggerating.

The Dutch did not fail to expel the Portuguese from this island of treasures. It seemed as though Portugal had only undertaken so many difficult voyages and conquered so many kingdoms in the heart of Asia for the sake of the Dutch. The

* Or, more usually, Saradep.

latter, having made themselves masters of all the coasts of Ceylon, forbade everyone to land there. They made the ruler of the island their vassal; and it never occurred to the Rajas, the Nawabs and the Soubeidars in India even to attempt to dispossess them.

Leaving the coast of Malabar, which we have surveyed, you come to the coasts of Coromandel and Bengal, the theatres of wars between the princes of those countries, and between France and England.

We shall not speak any more here of Monarchs and Zamorin " King of Kings " ; instead we shall speak of the Soubeidars, the Nawabs, and the Rajas. This Coromandel coast is inhabited by Europeans, as is that of Malabar. First we come across the Dutch at Negapatam, which they have made, it is said, into quite a flourishing town.

Higher up is Tranquebar, a small territory which the Danes have bought, and where they have founded a little town more lovely than Negapatam. Near Tranquebar, the French had a trading centre and fort at Caricul. Above this the English had Goudelour and St. David.

PONDICHERRY

Quite near Fort St. David, in an arid plain without a port, the French bought, like the others, from the Soubeidar of the Deccan province a small piece of land where they built a station, which they later made into a town of considerable importance,— the Pondicherry of which we have alread spoken. At first, it was merely a trading centre surrounded by a thick hedge of acacias, palms, cocoanut trees, and aloes, and it was called " the boundary hedge ".

MADRAS

Thirty leagues north is Madras, as we have seen before,— the chief English commercial centre. The town is partly built of the ruins of Mylapore, which had been changed by the Portugese into St. Thome, in honour of St. Thomas Dydime, the apostle.

One still finds in these parts the remains of Syrians, called at first "Christians of Thomas" because Thomas, a Syrian merchant, came to settle there with his agents in the sixth century of our era. Soon afterwards, people became certain that it was St. Thomas himself. One sees everywhere traditions that grow from public opinion; monuments and customs founded on similar misinterpretations. The Portuguese believed that St. Thomas had come on foot from Jerusalem to the Coromandel coast as a carpenter to build a magnificent palace for the king Gondaser. The Jesuit Tachard has seen near Madras an opening that St. Thomas made in the middle of a mountain in order to escape through this hole from the hands of a Brahman who was following him with spear blows—although the Brahmans have never given spear blows to anybody. English Christians and French Christians have killed each other in our days with cannons on this same ground that Nature did not seem to have made for them. The so-called Christians of St. Thomas were at least peaceful merchants.

Farther off, is the little fort of Palicate belonging to the Dutch. From that place they go to buy diamonds from the Nawab of Golconda's territory.

Masulipatam

Fifty leagues to the North, the English and the French were quarrelling over Masulipatam, where the loveliest printed fabrics are made and where all nations traded. M. Dupleix obtained from the Nawab the complete establishment. The foreigners, it may be noticed, have shared out all this coast, and the Indians have not kept anything for themselves of their own land.

After passing the Coromandal coast, we arrive on the heights of Golconda, where are to be found diamond mines, the object of the greatest greed. The Nawabs had for a long time prevented foreign countries from making any fixed establishments in this province. First of all, the agents of the English and Dutch came to buy diamonds which they sold in Europe.

CALCUTTA

The English possessed in the north of Golconda the little town of Calcutta built by them on the Ganges in Bengal, a province which is considered the most beautiful, the richest, and the most delightful country in the world.

CHANDERNAGOR

As for the French, they had Chandernagor and another small trading centre on the Ganges. It is at Chandernagor that M. Dupleix began to amass his huge fortune, which he later lost. He had equipped there on his own account fifteen ships which used to go to all the ports of Asia, before he was nominated Governor of Bengal.

HOOGLI*

The Dutch have the town of Hoogli between Calcutta and Chandernagor. It is interesting to note that in all the recents wars which have upset India, which have started England down the slope of ruin, and which have destroyed the French, the Dutch have never openly taken sides : they have not exposed themselves, and have peacefully enjoyed their commercial advantages without attempting to make empires. They possessed quite a good one in Batavia. They have been seen fighting against the Spanish and the Dutch, but in these latter wars have behaved like clever negotiators.

Let us note specially that, although so many European peoples had big armed warships on all the coasts of India, it is only the Indians who have not had any, if we except just one pirate. Is it weakness and ignorance of Government ? Is it softness, is it confidence in the bounty of their vast and fertile lands which have no need of our gifts ? It is all these things put together.

* Ougli, according to Voltaire.

Chapter XII

What happened in India before General Lalli arrived. The history of Angria ; the English destroyed in Bengal

HAVING now described as well as we can the shores of India which are so interesting to the trading nations in Europe and Asia, we shall next tell about a service which England did to the world.

WHO WAS ANGRIA ?

It was a hundred years ago that a Mahratta called Conoge Angria, who had captained several of the ships of his nation against those of the Emperor of India, became a pirate, and having retreated towards Bombay, robbed indifferently his compatriots, his neighbours, and all the traders who sailed in that sea. He had easily gained possession of some small islands on this coast, which were no more than unapproachable rocks. He fortified one of them by digging ditches in the rock. His fortress was supported by walls ten to twelve feet thick, surmounted by cannons. It was there that he hid away his booty. His son and grandson continued with the same work and with even greater success. An entire province behind Bombay was under the sway of this last Angria. Thousands of Mahratta vagabonds, Indians, Christian renegades, and negroes had come to swell the numbers of this *Brigand Republic*, which was very like that of Algiers. The Angria family proved conclusively that the earth and the sea belong to those who make an attempt to capture them. We see, each in their turn, two robbers form great kingdoms for themselves in the North and South of India. One is Abdala* in Kabul, the other Angria in Bombay. How many big Powers have had no better beginnings !

The English had to arm two fleets one after the other against these new conquerors. Admiral James began this war

*Voltaire, most probably, means Ahmad Shah Abdali.

(and it deserved the name of war) in 1755, and Admiral Watson brought it to a close. Captain Clive, afterwards so famous, gave proof of his military talent there. All the refuges of these notorious thieves were taken in succession. In the rock which acted as their stronghold were found huge piles of merchandise, two hundred cannons, arsenals containing arms of every kind, the value of one hundred and fifty million French francs in gold, diamonds, pearls and perfumes : things the like of which could hardly be found on the Coromandel coast or Peru were hidden there. Angria escaped. Admiral Watson took his mother, wife and children prisoners. He treated them well, as one can well imagine. The youngest child, hearing that they had not been able to find Angria, threw his arms round the Admiral's neck and said to him : "Then it will be *you* who will be my father." Mr. Watson had these words translated to him through an interpreter. He was moved to tears by them, and he actually became a father to the whole family. This happy action, so worth remembering, were rewarded in the chief English station in Bengal by an *even greater* disaster.

The English Exterminated

A quarrel arose between their Calcutta station on the Ganges and the Soubeidar of Bengal. This Prince thought that the English had a big garrison at Calcutta because they had taken possession of the town. The town, however, only contained a Merchants' Council and about three hundred soldiers. The biggest prince in India marched against them with sixty thousand soldiers, three hundred cannons, and three hundred elephants.

A Quaker Governor, 1756

The Governor of Calcutta, called Drake, was very different from the famous Admiral Drake. It is said that he belonged to the simple Nazarene religion, followed by those respectable Pennsylvanians whom we know by the name of Quakers. These simple folk, whose native land is Philadelphia in the New World, and who ought to make us blush for shame, have the same horror of war as the Brahmins. They look upon war as a crime. Drake was a very clever merchant, and a good man. Until then, he

had kept his religion a secret. When he declared it, the Council sent him to the Ganges to hide him.

Who could imagine that the Moghuls lost twelve thousand men at the first attack ? Reports tell us so. If it is true, nothing could better confirm the superiority of Europe. But they could not hold out for long. The town was taken, and everyone imprisoned. There were among the captives one hundred and forty-six English officers and agents, who were put into a prison called the Black Hole. They had a terrible experience in that hot and enclosed air . or rather in that vapour, continuously exhaled from every body which has been given the name of "air and element."* One hundred and twenty-three men died of it in a few hours. Boerhave, in his *Chemistry*, recounts an even stranger example – that of a man who fell down in a state of decay in a sugar refinery the minute the door was closed. This strength in vapours shows the necessity of ventilators, above all in hot climates, and the fatal dangers that threaten human bodies not only in prisons but at public gatherings where the crowd is thick. Above all, they are necessary in churches where they have the wretched custom of burying the dead, and from which comes a disease-bringing stench.†

Mr. Holwell, the Deputy Governor in Calcutta, was one of those who escaped this sudden contagion. They led him with twenty-two dying officers to Maksudabad‡ in Bengal. The Soubeidar took pity on them and had their irons taken off. Holwell offered him a ransom. The Prince refused it saying that he had already suffered too much without being obliged to pay for his liberty.

Holwell the only European who has understood the beliefs of the Brahmins

It is this Holwell who learnt not only the language of the

*Voltaire writes: *le nom d'air et d'element.*

† In Saulieu in Burgandy, in June 1773, sixty children had assembled in the church for their first communion, and just at that time it was decided that they should dig a grave in the church in order to bury a corpse there that very evening. Such a bad smell rose up from this grave, where there were several other old corpses, that the priests, forty children and two hundred parishioners who had entered the church died of it, if we can believe the public newspapers. Will this terrible warning not to meddle with the temples of dead bodies still be futile in France ? How long will this horrible act be looked upon as a sign of piety ? (V.)

‡ Old name for Murshidabad. Voltaire says Maxadabad.

modern Brahmins but also that of the old Brahmins.* It is the same man who afterwards wrote such valuable memoirs on India, and who has translated wonderful pieces from the first religious books written in the sacred language, and some more ancient than those from the *Sanconiaton* of Phœnicia, the Mercury of Egypt and the first law-givers of China. The learned Brahmins of Benares attribute an age of five thousand years to these books.

We thankfully take this opportunity of acknowledging what we owe to a man who only travelled in order to increase his knowledge. He has revealed to us things which had been hidden for many centuries : he has done more than Pythagoras and the *Apollonius of Thiane*. We beg of all people who wish to gain knowledge as he did to read with care these old fables and allegories, the primitive source of all the fables which have passed for truths in Persia, Chaldea, Egypt, and Greece, among the smallest and most poverty-stricken tribes as well as among the most prosperous nations. These subjects are more worthy of the study of the wise man than the quarrels of a few employees for muslins and printed fabrics, about which we shall be forced, in spite of ourselves, to talk in the course of this book.

To come back to the revolution in India, the Soubeidar, who was called Siraj-ud-Dowla † was by origin a Tartar. It was said that, following the example of Aurangzeb, his plan was to take possession of the whole of India. There is no doubt that he was very ambitious, because he had the opportunity of being so. It is also reported that he despised the hard-hearted, weak-minded emperor who was indolent and cowardly, and that he hated equally the foreign merchants who came to profit by the troubles of the Empire and increase them. As soon as he had taken the English

*It is not that we have a blind faith in everything that Mr. Holwell tells us – we should not have that kind of belief in anyone—but at least he has shown us that the dwellers of the Ganges (Gangarides) had written a mythology, whether good or bad, *five thousand* years ago, just as the learned and wise Jesuit Parennin has shown us that the Chinese were a united people about that time. And, if they were like that then, they must have been like it before : big nations do not grow in a day. It is therefore not for us, who were only barbarians and savages when these people were polished and wise, to question their antiquity. It is possible, in the number of revolutions which have changed everything on the earth, that Europe knew the arts and the sciences before Asia, but no trace of them remains and Asia is full of old monuments. (V.)

† Suraia-Doula according to Voltaire.

fort, he threatened those of the French and the Dutch, but these were re-purchased for sums of money which were quite reasonable for this country—the French for about six hundred thousand pounds, the Dutch for about twelve hundred thousand francs, because they are richer. The Prince therefore was not at all concerned with destroying them. He had in his army a rival with the same ambitions as himself, his relation and a relation of the Grand Moghul, who was more to be feared than a group of merchants. However, Siraj-ud-Dowla thought like more than one Turkish Vizir and more than one Sultan of Constantinople who have wished to drive out at one time or another ambassadors of the Princes of Europe and all their agents, but who finally have made them pay dearly for the right to reside in Turkey.

THE ENGLISH AVENGED

As soon as the news of the danger to the English on the Ganges was received in Madras, all the armed men they could gather together were sent by sea to help them.

M. de Bussi, who was there with some troops, took advantage of this occasion and with M. Lass took possession of all the English stations beyond Masulipatam, on the coast of the big province of Orissa, between Golconda and Bengal. This success somewhat strengthened the Company which was soon to collapse.

In the meantime Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive, the conquerors of Angria and saviours of the Malabar coast, were also coming to Bengal by the Coromandel sea. On the way they learnt that the only way to get back to their town Calcutta was by fighting, and they hurried there with full sails. So there was war in a very short time from Surat right to the mouth of the Ganges, in territory one thousand leagues in length, just as it often happens in Europe between so many Christian Princes whose interests clash and change continually and cause so much unhappiness to mankind.

When Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive arrived at the coast of Calcutta, they found the good Quaker Governor of Calcutta and those who had escaped with him, hiding on

dilapidated boats on the Ganges. They had not been followed. The Soubeidar had a hundred thousand soldiers, cannons, and elephants, but no ships. The English, expelled from Calcutta, were patiently waiting on the Ganges for the help coming from Madras. The Admiral gave them the food they required. The Colonel, helped by the officers of the Fleet, and the sailors who swelled his little army, hurried to attack all the forces of the Soubeidar, but he only met a Raja, a Governor of the town, who came to him at the head of a considerable body of men. He put him to flight. This strange Governor instead of going back to his place went to take the alarm to the camp of his Prince and told him that the English that he had met were of a very different kind from those who had been captured in Calcutta.

Singular letter of Colonel Clive to a Prince

Colonel Clive confirmed the Prince in this idea by writing to him these very words (if we are to believe the public papers and memoirs of the time): "An English Admiral, who commands an invincible fleet, and a soldier whose name is well enough known to you, have come to punish you for your cruelties. It is better for you to give us satisfaction than to await our vengeance." He knew how to use this audacious and oriental style of expressing himself. The Soubeidar knew quite well that his rival, of whom we have already spoken, a very powerful Prince with his army, who could not stop him, was already secretly negotiating with the English. He only replied to this letter by fighting a battle. It was indecisive, and fought between an army of about eighty thousand combatants and one of about four million, half English and half Sepoys. Then they negotiated and it was a question as to who could be the cleverest. The Soubeidar gave up Calcutta and the prisoners, but he was negotiating secretly with M. de Bussi, and Colonel, or rather General Clive, was negotiating on his side secretly with the rival of the Soubeidar. This rival was called Jaffer; he wanted to ruin his relation, the Soubeidar, and dethrone him. The Soubeidar wanted to destroy the English by means of his new friends, the French, so that in the end he would be able to destroy his friends as well. These are the terms of the strange treaty that the Moghul Prince Jaffer signed in his tent:

A KINGDOM SOLD AWAY AND SWORN ON THE KORAN

" In the presence of God and his Prophet, I swear I will abide by this treaty as long as I live, I, Jaffer, etc., etc."

" The enemies of the English shall be my enemies, etc."

" In order to indemnify them for the loss that Levia-Oda* has made them suffer, I shall give them a hundred lakhs (that is, twenty-four million pounds in our currency).

" For the other inhabitants, fifty more lakhs (twelve millions)."

" For the Moors and the Hindus in the service of the English, twenty lakhs (four millions eight hundred thousand pounds)."

" For the Armenians, who trade in Calcutta, seven lakhs (sixteen hundred and eighty thousand). The whole making about forty-two millions, four hundred and eighty thousand."

" I shall pay in cash without delay all these sums as soon as I am made Soubeidar of these provinces."

" The Admiral, the Colonel and four other officers (whom he names) can dispose of this money as they like."

" This was stipulated in order to save them from all blame."

....

Besides these presents, the Soubeidar, guided by Colonel Clive, extended the lands of the Company to a very great extent. M. Dupleix had not obtained anywhere near the same concessions when he created Nawabs.

It is not reported that the English soldiers swore this treaty on the Bible—perhaps they had not got one. Moreover, it was more a note to a messenger than a treaty.

* This is most probably a French name for Seraj-ud-Daula. This belief is confirmed by the Government of India publication, *The Indian Record Series, Bengal, 1856-57*, Vol. II, 1905 edition. On pp. 383-84 of this book are given the proposed articles of agreement between Jafar Ali Khan Bahadur and the Honourable East India Company. This agreement was accepted, signed and sworn to by Mir Jafar on June 3, 1757. Article four of the agreement runs thus:

" In consideration of the heavy losses the English Company sustained by the destruction of Calcutta by Serajah Dowlat, and also on account of the expenses of the war they shall receive the sum of [one hundred *lack* of *sicca* rupees]' (*Trans*).

The Soubeidar Siraj-ud-Dowla on his side sent real help in money to M. de Bussi and M. Lass, while his rival Jaffer only gave promises. He wanted to get Jafler killed, but that Prince had guarded himself too well. Both of them, in their great hate and defiance of one another, swore inviolable friendship on the Koran.

The Victory of Clive

The Soubeidar, deceived and wanting to deceive, led Jaffer against the English force, that we dare to call an army. At last, on the 30th of June there was a decisive battle between him and Colonel Clive. The Soubeidar lost it. His cannons, his elephants, his goods and his artillery were taken from him. Jaffer was at the head of a separate camp. He did not fight. It was the prudence of a treacherous man ...if the Soubeidar had been the victor, he would have united with him ; if the English had gained the victory, he would have marched with them. The conquerors followed the Soubeidar and entered after him into Maksudabad and his capital. The Soubeidar fled and wandered about miserably for some days. Colonel Clive greeted Jaffer as Soubeidar of three provinces : Golconda, Bengal and Orissa, comprising one of the finest kingdoms on earth.

Siraj-ud-Dowla, the dethroned Prince, was fleeing alone and without hope. He learnt that there was a grotto where a holy Faqir was living (a sort of monk, or Muslim hermit) and he took refuge in his cave. He was amazed when he recognized the Faqir as a scoundrel whose ears and nose he had had cut off long ago. The Prince and the Saint came to an agreement by means of some money, but, in order to earn more, the Faqir exposed the whereabouts of the runaway to his conqueror.

Sovereign Condemned to Death

Dowla was taken prisoner and condemned to death by Jaffer. His prayers and tears did not save him, and he was executed without pity after they had thrown water on his head, according to a strange ceremony, honoured since time immemorial on the banks of the Ganges, where the people have always

attributed singular properties to the water. It is a kind of purification which has since been copied in Egypt, and is the origin of lustral water with the Greeks and the Romans. In the papers of this unhappy Prince were found all his letters to M. de Bussi and M. Lass.

THE FRENCH LOSE CHANDERNAGORE

It is during this expedition that General Clive rushed to conquer Chandernagore, at that time the most important station owned by the French in India, which was full of an immense quantity of goods, and defended by a hundred and sixty cannons, five hundred French soldiers, and seven hundred negroes.

Clive and Watson had only four hundred more men, but at the end of five days they had to surrender. The treaty of capitulation was signed by the General and the Admiral on the one hand, and on the other by the officers Fournier, Nicolas, la Potiers and Caillot, on the 23rd of March 1757. These commissioners demanded that the conquerors should leave the Jesuits in the town. Clive replied " The Jesuits can go wherever they like except where we are staying."

In another interview, he said : "Nobody can challenge my honour with impunity : my judges should keep theirs." Almost all the principal agents of the English company acted in the same way. Their liberality equalled their wealth. The shareholders lost but England gained, since at the end of a few years everyone comes back to his fatherland to spend what he has been able to amass on the banks of the Ganges and on the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar. In just the same way, the huge treasure won by Admiral Anson when he made a tour of the world, and the fortunes acquired by so many other admirals in their conquests, swelled the riches of the nation.

The goods that they found in the shops were sold for one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds sterling (about two million eight hundred and sixty thousand francs). All the successes of the English in this part of India were principally due to the good offices of this famous Clive. His name was respected at the

court of the Grand Moghul, who sent him an elephant loaded with magnificent presents and the title of Raja. The King of England created him a Peer of Ireland. It is he who replied, during the recent debates which arose on the subject of the East India Company, to those who wanted him to render account of the millions that he had amassed with his glory : " I gave one to my secretary, two to my friends, and the rest I kept for myself."

Since the victories of Lord Clive, the English have reigned in Bengal, and the Nawabs who wanted to attack them have been repulsed. But in spite of this, in London it was feared that the Company would perish from excessive happiness, just as the French Company was destroyed by discord, want, the paucity of the help which came too late, and the continual changing of ministers, who only had confused and false ideas on India, and who changed without rhyme or reason the orders blindly given by their predecessors.

All the misfortunes of the state naturally fell on the Company. They could not be effectively helped when there was fighting in Germany, when Canada was being lost, with Martinique, Guadeloupe in America, Goree in Africa, and all the colonies at Senegal—when all the ships had been captured, and when finally the King and the citizens of France were selling their plate to pay the soldiers (a slender resource in such a big catastrophe !)

Chapter XIII

The Arrival of Count Lalli : his successes and failures. The actions of a Jesuit called Lavour

It was in these circumstances that General Lalli, the chief of d'Aché's squadron, after having stayed in the Isle of Bourbon, came to the coast of Pondicherry on April 28, 1758. The ship, called the "Count of Provence", which carried the General was saluted by the firing of cannon with real shot, which damaged it very badly. This strange mistake, or this malice of some subordinates, was looked upon as a bad omen by the sailors, who are always superstitious, and even by Lalli, although he was not superstitious by nature.

This Commander had the baton of a Marshal of France in view. He thought he could obtain it if he managed a big revolution in India, and rehabilitated the honour of the French armies, at that time poorly maintained in other parts of the world. His second passionate desire was to humiliate the pride of the English whom he bitterly hated.

Lalli begins by Besieging three places and taking them

As soon as he arrived, he besieged three places: one was Kudalur,* a little fort three miles from Pondicherry; the second was Saint David, a much bigger fortress; the third Devikota,† which surrendered as he approached. It was flattering for him to have under his orders, in these first expeditions, a Count d'Estaing, descendant of that d'Estaing who saved the life of Philip Augustus at the battle of Bovine, and who transferred to his family the arms of the kings of France; a Constans, whose family was so old and famed, a La Fare, and many other officers of the first rank. It was not customary to send out young men of big families to take service in India. It would certainly have been necessary to have more troops and money with them. However, the Count d'Estaing had taken Kudalur in a day; and the day after, the General,

* Old name for Cuddalore. Voltaire says Goudalour.
† Voltaire says Divicotey.

followed by this flower of manhood, had gone to lay seige to the important station of St. David.

A NAVAL BATTLE BETWEEN ADMIRAL POCOCK AND ADMIRAL D'ACHE : 29TH APRIL 1758

Not a minute was lost between the two rival nations. While Count d'Estaing was taking Kudalur, the English Fleet, commanded by Admiral Pocock, was attacking that of Comte d'Aché on the coast of Pondicherry. Men wounded or killed, broken masts, torn sails, tattered rigging, were the sole results of this indecisive battle. The two damaged fleets remained in those parts, equally unable to injure one another. The French was the worst treated—it had only forty dead, but five hundred men had been wounded, including Comte d'Aché and his captain, and after the battle, by bad luck, a ship of seventy-four cannons was lost on the coast. But a palpable proof that the French Admiral* shared with the English Admiral the honour of the day, is that the Englishmen did not attempt to send help to the besieged Fort St. David.

Everything was opposed in Pondicherry to the enterprise of the General. Nothing was ready to second him. He demanded bombs, mortars, and utensils of all kinds, and they had not got any. The siege dragged along ; people began to fear the disgrace of abandoning it ; even money was lacking. The two millions brought by the fleet and given to the treasury of the Company were already spent. The Merchants' Council of Pondicherry had thought it necessary to pay their immediate debts in order to revive their credit, and had issued orders to Paris that, if help of ten millions was not forthcoming, everything would be lost. The Governor of Pondicherry, the successor of Godeheu, on behalf of the Merchants' administration, wrote to the General on the 24th May this letter, which was received in the trenches :

" My resources are exhausted and we have no longer any hope left unless we are successful. Where shall I find resources

* We give the name of admiral to the chief of a squadron because it is the title of the English chiefs of squadrons. The " Grand Admiral " is in England what the admiral is in France. (V.)

in a country ruined by fifteen years of war, enough to pay the expenses of your army and of a squadron from which we were hoping for a great deal of help. On the contrary, there is nothing."

This single letter explains the cause of all the disasters which had been experienced and of all those that followed. The more the want of necessary things was felt in the town, the more the General was blamed for having undertaken the siege of Fort St. David.

In spite of so many defeats and obstacles, the General forced the English commander to yield. In St. David were found one hundred and eighty cannons, all kinds of provisions which were lacking in Pondicherry, and money of which there was a still greater lack. There was three hundred thousand pounds in coin, which was all forwarded to the treasury of the Company. We are only noting here facts on which all parties agree.

THE 2ND JULY 1758. LALLI PUTS THIS COMBAT ON THE 3RD OF AUGUST IN HIS MEMOIRS. IT IS A MISTAKE

Count Lalli demolished this fortress and all the surrounding small farms. It was an order of the Minister : an ill-fated order which soon brought sad reprisals. As soon as Fort St. David had been taken, the General left to conquer Madras. He wrote to M. de Bussi who was then in the heart of the Deccan : " As soon as I become the master of Madras, I am going to the Ganges, either by land or sea. My policy can be summarized in these five words : " No more English in the Peninsula." His great zeal was unquenchable, and the fleet was not in a fit condition to back him up. It had just attempted a second naval battle in sight of Pondicherry, which was even more disastrous than the first. Comte d'Aché received two wounds, and, in this bloodthirsty fight, he had resisted the attacks of a naval army, twice as strong as his own, with five dilapidated ships. After this conflict, he demanded masts, provisions, rigging and crew from the Town Council. He got nothing. The General on the sea was no more helped by this exhausted Company than the General on the land. He went to the Ile de France near the coast of Africa to find what he had not been able to discover in India.

At the beginning of the Coromandel coast is quite a beautiful province called Tanjore. The Raja of this land, whom the French and the English called " King ", was a very rich prince. The Company claimed that this prince owed them about thirteen millions in French money.

The Actions and Letters of the Jesuit Lavour

The Governor of Pondicherry, on behalf of the Company, ordered the General to demand this money again with his sword in his hand. A French Jesuit, named Lavour, the head of the Indian Mission, told him and wrote to him that *Providence blessed this project in an unmistakable manner.* We shall be forced to speak again of this Jesuit who played an important and tragic part in all these happenings. All we need say at present is that the General, on his journey, passed over the territory of another small prince, whose nephews had a short time before offered four lakhs of rupees to the Company in order to obtain their uncle's small state and expel him from the country. This Jesuit eagerly persuaded Count Lalli to do this good work. This is one of his letters, word for word: " The law of succession in those countries is the law of the strongest. You must not regard the expulsion of a prince here as on the same level as in Europe." He told him in another letter: " You must not work simply for the glory of the King's arms. A word to the wise. . . . . . ." This act reveals the spirit of the country and of the Jesuit.

The Prince of Tanjore sought the help of the English in Madras. They got ready to create a diversion, and he had time to admit other auxiliary troops into his capital which was threatened by a siege. The little French army did not receive from Pondicherry either provisions or the necessary ammunition, and they were forced to abandon the attempt. Providence did not bless them as much as the Jesuit had foretold. The Company received money neither from the Prince nor from the nephews who wished to dispossess their uncle.

General Lalli in a Peculiar Kind of Danger

As they were preparing to retreat, a negro of those parts, the commander of a group of negro cavalry men in Tanjore, came

and presented himself to the advance guard of the French Camp followed by fifty horsemen. He said that they wanted to speak to the General and enter his service. The Count was in bed, and came out of his tent practically naked with a stick in his hand. Immediately the negro captain aimed a sword blow at him, which he just managed to parry, and the other negroes fell on him. The General's guard ran up instantly and nearly all the assassins were killed. That was the sole result of the Tanjore expedition.

Chapter XIV

Count Lalli besieges Madras. His misfortunes begin

AT last, after useless expeditions and attempts in this part of India, and in spite of the departure of the French fleet, which was believed to be threatened by the English, the General recommenced his favourite project of besieging Madras.

" You have too little money and too few provisions ", people said to him : he replied " We shall take them from the town ". A few members of the Pondicherry Council lent him thirty-four thousand rupees. The farmers of the village or *aldees*[1] of the Company advanced some money. The General also put his own into the fund. Forced marches were made, and they arrived in front of the town which did not expect them.

MADRAS TAKEN ON THE 13TH DECEMBER 1758.

Madras, as is well known, is divided into two parts, very different from one another. The first, where Fort St. George is, is well fortified, and has been so since Bourdonnaye's expedition. The second is much bigger and is inhabited by merchants of all nations. It is called the "Black City", because the "Blacks" are most numerous there. It occupies such a large space that it could not be fortified : a wall and a ditch formed its defense. This huge, rich town, was pillaged.

It is easy to imagine all the excesses, all the barbarities into which rushes the soldier who has no rein on him, and who looks upon it as his incontestible right to murder, violate, burn, rape. The officers controlled them as long as they could, but the thing that stopped them the most was the fact that as soon as they entered the town, they had to defend themselves there. The Madras garrison fell on them ; a street battle ensued ; houses,

1. *Aldee* is an Arab word, preserved in Spain. The Arabs who went to India introduced there many terms from their language. Well-proved etimology often serves as a proof of the emigration of peoples.

gardens, Hindu, Muslim and Christian temples became battlefields where the attackers, loaded with booty, fought in disorder those who came to snatch away their spoils. Count d'Estaing was the first to attack English troops who were marching on the main road. The Lorraine batallion, which he was commanding, had not yet fully reassembled, and so he fought practically alone and was made a prisoner. This misfortune brought more in its wake, because, after being sent by sea to England, he was thrown at Portsmouth into a frightful prison: treatment which was unworthy of his name, his courage, our customs and English generosity.

The capture of Count d'Estaing, at the beginning of the fight, was likely to cause the loss of the little army, which, after having taken the "Black City" by surprise, was taken by surprise itself in return. The General, accompanied by all the French nobility of which we have spoken, restored order. The English were forced back right to the bridge built between Fort St. George and the "Black City". The Chevalier of Crillon rushed up to this bridge, and killed fifty English there. Thirty-three prisoners were made and they remained masters of the town.

The hope of taking Fort St. George soon, as La Bourdonnaye had done, inspired all the officers, but the most strange thing of all was that five or six million inhabitants of Pondicherry rushed up to the expedition out of curiosity, as if they were going to a fair. The force of the besiegers numbered only two thousand seven hundred European infantry, and three hundred cavalry men. They had only ten mortars and twenty cannons. The town was defended by sixteen thousand Europeans in the infantry and two thousand five hundred sepoys. Thus the besieged were stronger by eleven thousand men. In military tactics, it is agreed that ordinarily five besiegers are required for one besieged. Examples of the taking of a town by a number equal to the number defending it are rare : to succeed without provisions is rarer still.

What is most sad is the fact that two hundred French deserters went into Fort St. George. There is no other army where desertion is more frequent than the French army, either from a natural uneasiness in the nation or from hope of being better

treated elsewhere. These deserters appeared at times on the ramparts, holding a bottle of wine in one hand and a purse in the other. They exhorted their compatriots to imitate their example. For the first time, people saw a tenth of the besieging army taking refuge in the besieged town.

The siege of Madras, light-heartedly undertaken, was soon looked upon as impracticable by everybody. Mr. Pigot, the representative of the English Government and Governor of the town, promised fifty thousand rupees to the garrison if it defended itself well and he kept to his word. The man who pays in this way is better served than the man who has no money. Count Lalli had no other option but to try an attack. But, at the very time when this daring act was being prepared, in the port of Madras appeared six warships, part of the English fleet which was then near Bombay. These ships were bringing reinforcements of men and munitions. On seeing them, the officer commanding the trench deserted it. They had to raise the siege in great haste and go to defend Pondicherry, which was even more vulnerable to the English than Madras.

Anger against the General

There was no longer any question of making conquests near the Ganges. Lalli took his small army, decimated and discouraged, into Pondicherry, which was even more despairing. He only found there personal enemies who harmed him more than the English could. Almost all the Council and all the employees of the Company were angry, and insulted him about his misfortune. He brought their hatred upon himself by the bitter, violent reproaches he rained on them, and by abusive letters, which were the result of the vexation he felt at being inadequately seconded in his enterprises. Not that he did not know well enough that every Commander with a limited amount of power ought to rule the Council which shares it, and that if energetic action is necessary, he must use gentle words. But perpetual contradictions were embittering him, and the very position that he held brought on him the ill-will of almost the entire colony whom he had come to defend.

One is always filled with bitterness, almost without being conscious of it, at being ruled by a stranger. The very instructions sent by the Court to the General increased this kind of obsession in the people. He was ordered to keep watch on the conduct of the Council: the directors of the India Company had given him a memorandum on the inevitably corrupt practices of an administration so far away. Had he been the gentlest of men, he would have been hated. The letter which he wrote on the fourteenth of February to M. de Leirit, the Governor of Pondicherry, before the raising of the siege, made this hatred implacable. The letter ended with these words: "*I would rather command the kaffirs of Madagascar than remain in your Sodom, which you cannot prevent the English from destroying sooner or later, unless heaven does it first.*"

Lack of success in Madras poisoned all these wounds. Nobody pardoned him for being unfortunate, and he, on his side, did not forgive those who hated him. Some officers soon joined in this universal complaint, those of the India batallion, troops belonging to the Company, being the most embittered. Unfortunately they knew what the letter of instruction from France contained: "*You must beware of entrusting any expedition to Company troops alone. It is to be feared that their spirit of insubordination, indiscipline, and greed will lead them to commit faults, and it is only wise to prevent this, so that they may not have to be punished.*" Everything therefore contributed towards making the General hated without being respected.

Before going to Madras, filled with the idea of expelling the English from India, but lacking everything necessary for such great endeavours, he begged Corporal de Bussi to lend him five millions, for which he would be the only security. M. de Bussi wisely decided it was not the time to risk such a large sum of money, which was repayable as a result of very unlikely victories. He foresaw that a promissory note signed by Lalli and payable in Madras or Calcutta would never be accepted by the English. There are times when, if you lend your money, you make a secret enemy; if you refuse, you make an open one. The indiscretion of the demand, and the necessity of refusal, was the beginning of a dislike between the General and the

Corporal which degenerated into an irreconcilable hatred, and which did not help the affairs of the colony. Many other officers complained bitterly. They raged madly against him: they overwhelmed him with reproaches, anonymous letters and satires. He fell ill with grief, and, afterwards, for four months, fever and brainstorms troubled him. To console him, they insulted him still more.

Chapter XV

New misfortunes of the India Company

In this condition, which was hardly less sad than that of Pondicherry, the General was making new plans for a campaign. He sent to help the important station of Masulipatam, sixty leagues to the north of Madras, a M. de Moracin, civil and military officer, a clever, resolute man, capable of facing the English fleet, mistress of the sea, and of escaping. Moracin was one of his most prominent and fiery enemies. The General was reduced to the position of scarcely being able to employ other men. This officer, a member of the Council, went with five hundred men (as many soldiers as sailors) but Masulipatam had already been taken.* Moracin went eighty leagues further, on a ship which belonged to him, in order to fight a Rajah who owed money to the Company. He lost four hundred men and his money.

Who were these Princes, from whom an individual from Europe came to demand several million rupees by force of arms?

Another and even stranger example of Indian government deserves more attention.

Pondicherry and Madras are, as has already been said, on the coast of the big Naboby † of Carnatic, which the Europeans always call a kingdom. The English party, with five or six hundred men of their nationality (at the most); and the French party, with the same number of men, had each been protecting for

*We shall avoid entering into the petty details of the quarrels between Lalli and Moracin, between Moracin and Leirit, into a host of reciprocal complaints. If we had to give in detail all these wretched bickerings of so many of the Europeans transplanted into India, it would make a book bigger than the Encyclopædia. It is our primary necessity to write scientifically, and cut short the picture of human weaknesses.

† Nababie (*V.*).

some time their own particular Nabob; and it was always a question as to who would succeed in making his protegé the ruler.

The Chevalier of Soupire, a Marshal of the camp, had been for a long time in the Province of Arcot with some French soldiers, some black, and some sepoys, badly armed and badly paid. The Chevalier of Soupire also complained that they were not well-dressed: but that is not such a big misfortune in the torrid zone. There is a post in this province which is said to be of the greatest importance: the fortress of Wandewash* which protected the French stations. Wandewash* is situated in a small island formed by rivers. The French colony was still the mistress of this place. The English came to attack it: the Chevalier of Soupire repulsed them in a lively battle, but it was merely delaying the coming disaster.

A thing that one never sees except in that country is that the two Nabobs, for whom they were fighting, were both a hundred leagues from the battlefield. Pondicherry breathed more freely after this little success. But the naval army of Count d'Aché reappeared on the coast, and it was attacked again by Admiral Pocock, being more badly treated in this third battle than in the first ones, since one of the big warships caught fire and the mast was burnt. Four ships of the Company escaped. In the meanwhile, the French Admiral escaped the English Admiral, who, in spite of superiority of numbers and marines, was not able to take any of his vessels.

Count d'Aché then wanted to leave again for the Isles of Bourbon and France, which were always being threatened...... In all waters they had to fight for commercial interests. The Council of Pondicherry protested against the departure of the Admiral and made him responsible for the ruin of the Company, as if this man was the master of the elements and the English fleets. The Admiral let the merchants protest. He gave them the little money that he had brought along and disembarked about eight hundred men, then straightway hurried again to the Isle of France. Pondicherry without munitions and without food, was full of discord and consternation. The past, the present and the future were terrifying.

*Wandiwash or Wandewash. Vandavachi, according to Voltaire.

The revolt of the troops: October 1759

The troops who were protecting Pondicherry revolted. It was not one of those stormy mutinies which begin without reason and end in the same way. Necessity seemed to cast them into it: it was the only way left to them to get paid and have enough to eat. "Give us" they said, "our bread and our pay, or we shall go and ask the English for it." The soldiers in the corps wrote to the General that they would wait for four days, but that, at the end of that time, all their resources being exhausted, they would leave for Madras.

It has been claimed that this revolt was fomented by a Jesuit missionary called St. Estevan, who was jealous of his superior Father Lavour, who, on his side, betrayed the General as much as he betrayed the missionary. St. Estevan betrayed both of them. This conduct is not in accordance with the single-hearted enthusiasm which shines in the "Edifying Letters," and with the host of miracles with which the Lord rewarded this enthusiasm.

Whatever the case may be, it was necessary to find money: in India, sedition is not appeased by words. The Director of the Treasury, named Boyelau, gave up the little gold and silver that remained with him. The Chevalier of Crillon lent four thousand rupees; M. de Gadeville the same amount. Lalli, who happily had fifty thousand francs with him, gave them, and even persuaded the Jesuit, Lavaur, his secret enemy, to lend thirty-six thousand pounds in silver, which he was keeping for his own use or for his missions, the whole being repayable by the Company when it was in a position to do so. They owed the troops six months' pay, and the pay was high: it amounted to more than a crown per day for every horseman and thirteen sous a day for the soldiers. These may be small details, but we believe that they are necessary.

22nd January 1760

The revolt was only quietened at the end of seven days, and the good-will of the soldiers was weakened by it. The English came back to the fatal spot, Wandewash: they waged a second battle there which they won completely. M. de Bussi, the man

who was the most indispensable to the colony and the army, was taken prisoner there, and then everyone despaired.

ANOTHER REVOLT

After this defeat, the cavalry revolted again, and wanted to go over to the side of the English, preferring to serve the victors, who were sure to pay them, rather than the vanquished who still owed them a large part of their pay. The General brought them back a second time with his money but he could not prevent the desertion of a number of horsemen.*

Disasters quickly followed for a whole year afterwards. The colony lost all these posts ; the black troops, the sepoys, and the Europeans deserted them in crowds. They had recourse to the Marhattas, which each party employs in turn in the Moghul area : we have compared them with the Swiss, but, if, like them, they sell their services, and if they have something of their valour, they have not got their loyalty.

WHAT M. DE BUSSI REPORTS IN HIS MEMOIRS : PAGES 98 AND 184

The missionaries have their finger in everything in this part of India : one of them, who was a Portuguese and graced with the title of Bishop of Halicarnasse, had brought two thousand Marhattas. They did not fight on the day of the Wandewash battle, but, to perform some feats of arms, they pillaged all the

*What is the reason of this mad desire to desert ? Does love of one's country get lost the further away one travels ? The soldier, who yesterday fired on his enemies, tomorrow fires on his compatriots. A new duty has arisen : to kill other men or be killed by them. But why were there so many Swiss in the English troops, and not one in the French ? Why was it that, among these Swiss, united to France by so many treaties, were found so many officers and soldiers who had served the English against France in the same way in America and Asia ?

What is the reason that in Europe, even during peace time, thousands of French have deserted their flag to take this same foreign pay ? The Germans also desert, but the Spaniards only rarely ; the English hardly at all. It is unheard of for a Turk or a Russian to desert.

During the retreat of the Hundred Thousand, in the midst of the greatest dangers and the most discouraging hardships, not one Greek deserted. They were only mercenaries, officers as well as soldiers, who had sold themselves to the young Cyrus, to a rebel and a usurper. It is the task of the reader, and above all of the enlightened military, to find the cause and the remedy of this contagious malady, commoner to the French than other nations for many years, both in peace and war. (V.)

villages still belonging to France and shared the booty with the Bishop.*

We do not claim to be writing a journal about all the details of robbery, and to particularize about the peculiar difficulties which preceded the capture of Pondicherry and the general disaster. When an epidemic has destroyed a whole people, what is the good of tiring the living with a recital of all the symptoms which have carried away so many dead ? It is enough to say that General Lalli withdrew into Pondicherry, and that the English soon blockaded the capital.

* A Latin priest of the Greek town of Halicarnasse which belongs to the Turks ! A Bishop of Halicarnasse who preaches and pillages ! and, after that, who can say that the world is not ruled by contradictions. This man was called Norogna : he was a Franciscan monk from Goa, who, fled to Rome where he obtained the title of missionary bishop. Lalli sometimes used to say to him : " My dear prelate, how have you managed to save yourself from being burned or hanged ? "

Chapter XVI

An extraordinary happening in Surat. The English gain a victory

WHILE the French colony was in trouble and distress, the English were doing something in India, fifty-five leagues from Pondicherry, which held the attention of the whole of Asia.

Surate, or Surat, at the end of the Gulf of Cambay, had been, since the time of Tamerlane, the big market of India, of Persia and of Tartary. Even the Chinese had often sent their goods there. It still retained its brilliancy, being principally peopled by Armenians and Jews, courtiers of every nation, and each nation had its own establishment. It was to that place that the Muslim subjects of the Grand Moghul used to come when they wished to make the journey to Mecca. A single big ship which the Emperor kept at the mouth of the river which goes to Surat used to carry the pilgrims from there to the Red Sea. This ship and the other small Indian boats were captained by a Kaffir, who had brought a colony of Kaffirs to Surat.

This stranger died, and his son obtained his position. Two Kaffirs, admirals of the Grand Moghul one after the other, without anybody being able to tell from which side of Africa they came! Nothing shows better how badly the Moghul dominions were governed and therefore how unhappy they were. The son ruled tyrannically in Surat. The Governor could not resist him. All the merchants groaned under his continually growing extortions. He held all the Mecca pilgrims to ransom. Such was the weakness of the Grand Moghul, Alamgir, in all branches of the administration, and it is thus that empires perish.

At last, the Mecca pilgrims, the Armenians, the Jews, and all the inhabitants joined together to ask the English for protection against a Kaffir whom the descendant of Tamerlane dare not

punish. Admiral Pocock, who was then in Bombay, sent two vessels to Surat. This help, together with the troops commanded by Captain Maitland, who marched at the head of eight hundred English and fifteen hundred sepoys, was sufficient.

The Admiral and his party intrenched themselves in the gardens of the French settlement, beyond the gate of the city. It was natural that the English should pursue him: the French were giving him refuge.

This retreat was bombarded and fired at by cannons. There were many factions in Surat, and people feared that one of them would call the Marhattas who are always ready to take advantage of divisions in the Empire.

MARCH 1759

Finally, differences were made up, and they allied themselves with the English: the doors of the castle were opened. The French settlement in the city was not protected from pillage, but none of the employees was killed and the day of struggle only cost their lives to a hundred members of the Admiral's party and twenty soldiers of Captain Maitland.

The Kaffirs retreated where they could. If it is unusual that a man of that nation should have been an Admiral of the Empire, an even stranger thing happened: the Emperor gave the title and the salary of Admiral to the English Company. This position was worth three lakhs of rupees and certain rights. The whole amounted to eight hundred thousand francs a year. The opportunity of attracting to themselves all the commerce of Surat was worth twenty times more.

This strange gift seemed to strengthen the power and the high position of the English in India, at least for a very long time, and the Company of Pondicherry was rapidly descending the road towards destruction.

Chapter XVII

The capture and destruction of Pondicherry

WHILE the English army was advancing towards the West and a new fleet was threatening the town in the East, Count Lalli had very few soldiers. He made use of a trick, quite usual in war and in civil life : he tried to appear to have more than he really had. He ordered a parade on the walls of the town on the seaward side. He issued instructions that all the employees of the Company should appear in uniform as soldiers, in order to overawe the enemy fleet which was alongside.

A THIRD REVOLT

The Council of Pondicherry and all its employees came to him to say that they could not obey this order. The employees said that they recognized as their Commander only the Governor established by the Company. All ordinary ***bourgeois*** think it degrading to be a soldier, although in reality it is the soldiers who give us empires. But the real reason is that they wished to cross in everything the man who had incurred the hatred of the people.

It was the third revolt which he had patched up in a few days. He only punished the heads of the faction by making them leave the town ; but he insulted them with crushing words which are never forgotten, and which are bitterly remembered when one has the opportunity of revenge.

Further, the General forbade the Council to meet without his permission. The enmity of this Company was as great as that of the French Parliament's was against the Commanders who brought the strict orders of the Court to them—often contradictory ones He had therefore to fight citizens and enemies.

The place lacked provisions. He had houses searched for

the few superfluous goods to be found there, in order to provide the troops with food necessary for their subsistence. Those who were entrusted with this sad task did not carry it out with enough discretion with regard to most of the important officers, whose name and position deserved the greatest tact. Feelings, already irritated, were wounded beyond the limit: people cried out against the tyranny. M. Dubois, Commissary of Stores, who carried out this task, became the object of public condemnation. When conquering enemies order such a search, nobody dare even whisper, but when the General ordered it to save the town, everyone rose against him.

The officers were reduced to a half-pound of rice per day; the soldiers to four ounces. The town had no more than three hundred black soldiers and seven hundred French, pressed by hunger, to defend itself against four thousand European soldiers and ten thousand black ones. They would have to surrender. Lalli, in despair, shaken by convulsions, his spirit lost and overcome, wished to give up the command in favour of the Brigadier of Landivisiau, who took good care not to accept such a delicate and tragic post. Lalli was forced to order the misfortune and shame of the colony. In the midst of all these crises, he was daily receiving anonymous notes threatening him with the sword and poison. He actually believed himself to be poisoned: he fell into an epileptic fit, and the Missionary Lavaur went to the townspeople to tell them that they must pray to God for the poor Irishman who had gone mad.

However, the danger was increasing; English troops had broken down the unhappy line of troops who were surrounding the town. The General wished to assemble a mixed Civil and Military Council which should try to obtain a surrender acceptable to the town and the colony. The Council of Pondicherry replied only by refusing, "You have broken us," they said, "and we are no longer worth anything." "I have not broken you," replied the General, "I have forbidden you to meet without my permission: and I command you, in the name of the King, to assemble and form a mixed Council to calm down the strong feelings in the whole colony as well as your own." The Council replied with this summons which they intimated to him:

" We summon you, in the name of the religious orders, of all the inhabitants and of ourselves to order Mr. Coote (the English commander) to suspend arms immediately and we hold you responsible to the King for all the misfortunes to which ill-timed delay may give rise."

The General thereupon called a Council of War, composed of all the principal officers still in service. They decided to surrender, but disagreed as to the conditions. Count Lalli, angered against the English who had, he said, violated on more than one occasion the cartel established between the two nations, made a separate declaration, in which he blamed them for breaking treaties. It was neither tactful nor wise to talk to the conquerors about their faults, and embitter those to whom he wished to surrender. Such, however, was his character.

Having told them his complaints, he asked them to grant protection to the mother and sisters of a Rajah, who had taken refuge in Pondicherry, when the Rajah had been assassinated in the very camp of the English. He reproached them bitterly, as was his wont, for having allowed such barbarism. Colonel Coote did not reply to this insolent statement.

The Jesuit Lavaur proposes capitulation

The Council of Pondicherry, on its side, sent terms of capitulation, drawn up by the Jesuit Lavaur, to the English Commander. The missionary carried them himself. This conduct might have been good enough in Paraguay, but it was not good enough for the English. If Lalli offended them by accusing them of injustice and cruelty, they were even more offended at a Jesuit of intriguing character being deputed to negotiate with victorious warriors. The Colonel did not even deign to read the terms of the Jesuit: he gave him his own. Here they are:

" Colonel Coote desires the French to offer themselves as prisoners of war, to be treated according to interests of his master the King. He will show them every indulgence that humanity demands.

He will send tomorrow morning, between eight and nine o'clock, the grenadiers of his regiment, who will take possession of the Vilnour door.

The day after tomorrow, at the same time, he will take possession of the St. Louis door.

The mother and the sisters of the Rajah will be escorted to Madras. Every care will be taken of them and they will not be given up to their enemies.

Written in our General Headquarters, near Pondicherry, on the 15th January 1761."

They had to obey the orders of General Coote. He entered the town. The small garrison laid aside their arms. The Colonel did not dine with the General, with whom he was annoyed, but with the Governor of the Company, M. Duval de Leirit, and a few members of the Council.

The English enter Pondicherry

Mr. Pigot, the Governor of Madras for the English Company, laid claim to his right on Pondicherry : they could not deny it, because it was he who was paying the troops. It was he who ruled everything after the conquest. General Lalli was all the time very ill ; he asked the English Governor for permission to stay four more days in Pondicherry. He was refused. They indicated to him that he must leave in two days for Madras.

We might add, since it is rather a strange thing, that Pigot was of French origin, just as Lalli was of Irish origin : both were fighting against their old fatherland.

Lalli ill-treated by his followers

This harshness was the least that he suffered. The employees of the Company, the officers of his troops, whom he had mortified without consideration, united against him. The employees, above

all, insulted him right up to the time of his departure, putting up posters against him, throwing stones at his windows, calling out loudly that he was a traitor and a scoundrel. The band of people grew bigger as idlers joined it, and they, in turn, soon became inflamed by the mad anger of the others. They waited for him in the place through which he was to be carried, lying on a palanquin, followed at a distance by fifteen English hussars who had been chosen to escort him during his journey to Madras. Colonel Coote had allowed him to be accompanied by four of his guards as far as the gate of the city. The rebels surrounded his bed, loading insults upon him, and threatening to kill him. They might have been slaves who wanted to kill with their swords one of their companions. He continued his march in their midst holding two pistols in his weakened hands. His guards and the English hussars saved his life.

The Commissary of Stores of the Army assassinated

The rebels attacked M. Dubois, an old and brave officer, seventy years old and Commissary of Stores for the Army, who passed by a moment later. This officer, the King's man, was assassinated: he was robbed, stripped bare of clothes, buried in a garden, and his papers immediately seized and taken away from his house, since when they have never been seen.

While General Lalli was being taken to Madras, the employees of the Company obtained permission in Pondicherry to open his boxes, thinking that they would find there his treasure in gold, diamonds and bills of exchange. All they found was a little plate, clothes, useless papers and it maddened them even more.

5th March 1761

Bowed down with sorrow and illness, Lalli, a prisoner in Madras, asked in vain for his transport to England to be delayed : he could not obtain this favour. They carried him by force on board a trading ship, whose captain treated him cruelly during the voyage. The only solace given him was pork broth. This English patriot thought it his duty to treat in this way an Irishman in the service of France. Soon the officers, the Council of

Pondicherry, and the chief employees were forced to follow him, but, before being transferred, they had the sorrow of seeing the demolition begun of all the fortifications that they had made for their town, and the destruction of their huge shops, their markets, all that was used for trade and defence, even to their own houses.

Mr. Dupre, chosen as Governor of Pondicherry by the Council of Madras, hurried on this destruction. He was (according to our information) the grandson of one of those Frenchmen whom the strictness of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes forced to become an exile from their fatherland and fight against it. Louis XIV did not expect that in about eighty years the capital of his India Company would be destroyed by a Frenchman.

The Jesuit Lavaur wrote to him in vain : " Are you equally anxious, Sir, to destroy the house in which we have a domestic altar where we can practice our religion secretly ?"

Dupre was little concerned with the fact that Lavaur was saying the Mass in secret : he replied that General Lalli had razed St. David to the ground and had only given three days to the inhabitants in which to take away their possessions, that the Governor of Madras had granted three months to the inhabitants of Pondicherry and that the English were at least equal to the French in generosity, but that he must go and say the Mass elsewhere. Thereupon the town was razed to the ground pitilessly, without the French having the right to complain.

Chapter XVIII

Lalli and the other prisoners are conducted to England and released on parole. Criminal suit against Lalli

THE prisoners, on the journey and in England, continued their mutual reproaches which despair made even more bitter. The General had his partisans, above all among the officers in the regiment bearing his name. Almost all the others were his enemies: one man would write to the French Ministers; another would accuse the opposite party of being the cause of the disaster. But the real cause was the same as in other parts of the world: the superiority of the English fleet, the carefulness and perseverance of the nation, its credit, its ready money, and that spirit of patriotism, which is stronger in the long run than the trading spirit and greed for riches.

General Lalli obtained permission from the Admiralty in England to enter France on parole. The majority of his enemies obtained the same favour: they arrived preceded by all the complaints and the accusations of both sides. Paris was flooded with a thousand writings. The partisans of Lalli were very few and his enemies innumerable.

A whole Council, two hundred employees without resources, the Directors of the India Company seeing their huge establishment reduced to nothing, the shareholders trembling for their fortune, irritated officers: everybody flew at Lalli with all the more fury because they believed that in their losing he had acquired millions. Women, always less restrained than men in their fears and their complaints, cried out against the traitor, the embezzler, the criminal guilty of high treason against the king.

The Council of Pondicherry, in a body, presented a petition against him in front of the Controller-General. In this petition,

they said: "*It is not a desire to avenge the insults and our ruin which is our motive—it is the force of truth, it is the pure feeling of our consciences, it is the popular complaint against him.*"

It seemed however that "the pure feelings of conscience" had been somewhat corrupted by the grief of having lost everything, by a personal hatred, perhaps excusable, and by a thirst for vengeance which cannot be excused.

A very brave officer of the ancient nobility, badly insulted without cause, whose honour, even, was involved, wrote in a manner even more violent than the Council of Pondicherry: "*This is*", he said, "*what a stranger without a name, with no deeds to his credit, without family, without a title, but none the less loaded with the honours of his master, prepares for the whole colony. Nothing was sacred in his sacrilegious hands : as a leader he even laid his hands on the altar appropriating six silver candlesticks, which the English General made him give back in response to the request of the head of the Capucines*", etc.

The General had brought on himself, by his indiscretion, his impetuosity, and his unjust reproaches, this cruel accusation: it is true that he had the candlesticks and the crucifix carried to his own house, but so publicly that it was not possible that he should wish to take possession of such a small thing, in the midst of so many big things. Therefore the sentence which condemned him does not speak of sacrilege.

The reproach of his low birth was very unjust: we have got his titles together with the seal of King John. His family was very old. People therefore were overstepping the limit with him just as he had done with so many others. If anything ought to inspire men with a desire for moderation, it is this tragic event.

The Finance Minister ought naturally to protect a trading company whose ruin was liable to do so much harm to the country: a secret order was given to shut Lalli in the Bastille. He himself offered to give himself up: he wrote to the Duke of Choiseul: "*I am bringing here my head and my innocence. I am awaiting your orders.*"

The Duke of Choiseul, Minister of War and Foreign Affairs, was generous to a fault, genial and just: the highness of his ideals equalled the breadth of his opinions, but, in an affair so important and complicated, he could not go against the clamorous demands of all Paris, nor neglect the host of imputations against the accused. Lalli was shut up in the Bastille in the same room where La Bourdonnaye had been and, like him, did not emerge from it.

It remained to be seen what judges they would give him. A Council of War seemed to be the most suitable tribunal, but he was also accused of misappropriation of funds, embezzlement, and crimes of peculation of which the Marshals of France are not the judges. Count Lalli at first only brought accusations against his enemies, who therefore tried to reply to them in some way. The case was so complicated, it was necessary to call so many witnesses, that the prisoner remained fifteen months in the Bastille without being examined, and without knowing the tribunal before which he was to plead. "That," several legal experts used to say, "is the tragic destiny of the citizens of a kingdom, famous for its arms and its arts but lacking in good laws, or rather a kingdom where the wise old laws have been sometimes forgotten."

THE JESUIT LAVAUR DIES. 1,250,000 POUNDS FOUND IN HIS CASH BOX

The Jesuit Lavaur was then in Paris: he was asking the Government for a modest pension of four hundred francs so that he might go and pray to God for the rest of his days in the heart of Perigord where he was born. He died, and twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds were found in his cash box, and more in diamonds and bills of exchange. This deed of a Mission Superior from the East, and the case of the Superior of the Western Missions, La Valette, who went into bankruptcy at the same time, with three millions in debts, excited over the whole of France an indignation equal to that which was excited against Lalli. This was one of the causes which finally got the Jesuits abolished, but, at the same time, the cash box of Lavaur settled the fate of Lalli. In this trunk were found two books of memoirs, one in favour of Lalli,

the other charging him with all kinds of crimes. The Jesuit was to make use of one or the other of these writings, according to the turn which affairs took. These documents were a double-edged sword, and the one that harmed Lalli was delivered to the Attorney-General. This supporter of the King complained to Parliament against the Count on account of his oppression, embezzlement, treachery and high treason. Parliament referred the suit in the first instance to the Châtelet. Soon afterwards, letters patent of the King sent to the High Tribunal and to the "Tournelle" *information of all the malpractices in India so that steps may be taken against the perpetrators in accordance with the severity of the ordinances.* It might have been better to stress the word *justice* rather than the word *severity.*

As the Attorney-General had accused him of the crimes of high treason and treachery against the Crown, he was denied a counsel. For his defence, he had no other help except his own. They allowed him to write, and he took advantage of this permission—to his own undoing. His writings annoyed his enemies all the more and made new foes. He reproached Count d'Aché with being the cause of his loss in India, because he did not remain before Pondicherry. But as chief of a squadron, d'Aché had definite orders to defend the Isles of Bourbon and France against a threatened invasion. He was accusing a man who had himself fought three times against the English fleet, and had been wounded during these three battles. He blamed the Chevalier of Soupire violently, and he was answered with a moderation as praiseworthy as it is rare.

Finally, testifying that he had always rigidly done his duty, he gave vent to the same excesses with his pen as formerly he used to do with his tongue. If he had been granted a counsel, his defence would have been more circumspect, but he all the time thought that it was enough to believe oneself innocent. Above all, he forced M. de Bussi to give a reply that was as mortifying as it was well written. All impartial men saw with sorrow two brave officers like Lalli and de Bussi, both of tried valour, who had risked their lives a hundred times, pretend to suspect one another of lack of courage. Lalli took too much upon himself by insulting all his enemies in his memoirs. It was

like fighting alone against an army, and it was impossible for him not to be overwhelmed. The talk of a whole town makes an impression on the judges even when they believe they are on their guard against such an influence.

Chapter XIX

The end of the suit against Lalli. His death

By a strange twist of fate, only to be observed perhaps in France, tragic happenings are nearly always mingled with the ridiculous. Indeed, it was very ridiculous to see men of peaceful habits, who had never left Paris except to go to their country seats, question, with the aid of a clerk of the court, generals on land and sea about their military operations.

The members of the Merchants' Council of Pondicherry, the shareholders of Paris, the Directors of the India Company, the employees, the clerks, their wives and relations complained to the judges and the friends of the judges against the Commander of an army consisting of hardly a thousand men, and against the Commander of a fleet which only contained one King's ship. Engagements had failed because the General was a traitor, and because the Admiral had gone to get his boat repaired instead of fighting a fourth naval battle! The names of Trichinopoly, Wandewash and *Chetoupet* were mentioned. The Councillors of the *Grand' Chambre* made bad maps of India in which these towns were not to be found.

Lalli was blamed for not taking possession of this place called *Chetoupet* before going to Madras. All the Marshals of France sitting together would have had a difficult task to decide from such a distance whether *Chetoupet* ought to be besieged or not. And yet this question was brought before the *Grand' Chambre*! The accusations were so complicated that it was inevitable that a Paris judge should often mistake a town for a man, and a man for a town.

The General on the land accused the General on the sea of being the primary cause of the failure of the campaigns, while he in his turn was accused by the whole of the Council of Pondicherry of being the sole cause of all misfortunes.

The Squadron Leader was summoned to be heard. He was asked why he had put the Cape in the South instead of being broadside on between *Alamparve* and Kudalur—name that no Parisian had ever heard about before.

As for General Lalli, he was charged with besieging Kudalur* instead of first besieging St. David ; with not having marched towards Madras immediately ; with not having evacuated the post at *Cheringan* ; with not having sent three hundred black or white soldiers as reinforcements to Masulipatam ; both with having capitulated at Pondicherry and with not having capitulated.†

There was some question about whether M. de Soupire, the Marshal of the Camp had, or had not, continued in military service after the loss of Cangivaron‡ (a station quite unknown at the *Tournelle*). It is true that while questioning Lalli about these facts they were particular to tell him that these were military operations on which they were not laying much stress. But it did not prevent them from implicating him as a result. In addition to the points on which he was accused which we have already seen, others followed about his private life. He was blamed for losing his temper with a Councillor of Pondicherry, and of having said to this Councillor, who boasted that he would give his blood for the Company, "Have you enough blood to provide black pudding for the King's men, who have not got enough bread ?" ... ... No. 74

They accused him of having abused another Councillor ... ... No. 87

of having condemned a hairdresser, who had burned a negress's shoulder with a hot iron, to receive a blow with the same iron on his own shoulder ... No. 88

* Goudalour (Voltaire).

† Marshal Keit said to an Empress of Russia : "Madam, if you send a traitor and a coward of a General to Germany, you can have him hung on his return. But if he is only inefficient, all the worse for you. Why did you choose him ? It is your fault —he did what he could and you still owe him your thanks.

‡ Conjevaram or Kanchiverum (*Trans*).

of being occasionally drunk ... ... No. 104

of having made a capuchin friar sing in the street ... No. 105

of having said that Pondicherry was like a brothel where some people caressed girls, and others wanted to throw them out of the windows .. ... No. 106

of having paid several visits to Madame Pigot who had run away from her husband ... ... No. 108

of having had rice given to his horses at a time when he had no horses ... ... No. 112

of having once given the soldiers " punch " with their cocoa ... ... No. 131

of having himself treated for an abscess of the liver before it had burst. And if the abscess had burst, he would fortunately have died ... ... No. 137

These complaints were combined with more important accusations. The most serious was that he had sold Pondicherry to the English ; and the proof they put forward was that during the blockade he had had some shots fired without any apparent reason, and that he had gone on his rounds at night to the beat of a drum ... ... Nos. 144-145

It is easy to see that these accusations were levelled by people who were annoyed. Such was their lack of sense that their excessive exaggeration seemed to discredit the other imputations as well. We need not mention here a hundred little money affairs which form such a chaos that it is easier for a merchant to bring some order into it than a historian. His defense seems very plausible, and the reader may again read for himself his warrant of arrest which did not accuse him of peculation.

There were seven heads of accusation against him, and public outcry increased the number and weight still more. The

trial, in spite of its appearing ridiculous, was becoming more serious, and the catastrophe was approaching.

The famous d'Aguesseau said in one of his speeches censuring Lalli addressing the magistrates of 1714: *You may be just and upright in your intentions, but are you always exempt from the injustice of prejudice? And cannot this kind of injustice be called "an error of virtue" or, if we dare say it, "a gentleman's crime".*

The term "crime" is very strong—an honest man does not commit crimes but he often makes bad faults, and what man, what Company, has not made the same kind of faults?

The judge-advocate was said to be a hard man, preoccupied and blood-thirsty. If he had deserved this blame, in its entirety, the word "crime" would not then perhaps have been too strong. He loved justice, but he wanted the full rigour of the law, and afterwards he would repent. His hands were still red with the blood of a child (a young man of seventeen years can be given this name) who had been blamed of an excess which age would have corrected, and which six months in prison would have expiated. It was he who had decided, fifteen judges against ten to make this victim die the most horrible of all deaths, reserved for parricides.* This scene was being enacted in a country which was called civilized, at the very time when the monstrous inquisition was being tamed elsewhere, and when the old laws of barbarous ages were being softened down in other countries. All the princes and all the states in Europe were horrified at this frightful judicial assassination. Even the magistrate was attacked by remorse, but he was not any the less pitiless in the trial of Count Lalli.

He, together with a few other judges, were convinced of the necessity of torture for the most pardonable deed; one would have

* Five votes sufficed to condemn a child to the accumulated tortures ordinary and extraordinary: to have his tongue pulled out with pincers, to have his hand cut off, to be thrown into the flames. A child! the grandson of a Lieutenant-General who had served the State! And this happening, more horrible than anything that has been reported or invented about cannibals, took place in a nation which passes for enlightened and humane.

thought that they took pleasure in it. Their maxim was that the accusers should always be believed rather than the accused, and that, if all that was necessary was to deny, nobody would be guilty. They had forgotten this reply of Emperor Julien, the philosopher who had himself administered justice in Paris: "*If to accuse was sufficient, nobody would be innocent.*"

The judges had to read and re-read a huge pile of papers, a thousand contradictory reports of military operations carried out at places whose name and position was unknown to them. There were facts of which it was impossible to form an exact idea; incidents, objections and replies constantly jutting into the line of argument. It was not possible for each judge to examine for himself all these details, and, even if they had had the patience to read them, how few people could unravel the truth out of such a multitude of contradictions! In complicated matters, one relies almost always on the judge-advocate, he guides our opinions, his word is enough, life and death, honour and shame are in his hands.

An attorney-general, having read all the evidence with tireless attention, was completely convinced that the accused should be acquitted. He was M. Seguir, of the same family as the Chancellor who made a name for himself in the dawn of *belles-lettres* (cultivated too late in France, as all the arts have been); a man, moreover, of considerable intelligence, and even more eloquent than the judge-advocate, although in a different way. He was so convinced that the Count was innocent that he gave his reasons openly before the judges and throughout Paris. M. Pellot, former Counsellor of the *Grand' Chambre*, perhaps the most diligent and sensible of the judges, was entirely of the opinion of M. Seguier.

The old French *Parlement* had been embittered by its frequent quarrels with officers who came to them with the orders of the King. It had been banished more than once for its resistance. Always resisting, it had become, almost without realizing it, the natural enemy of all military men in an elevated position, and might perhaps be believed to feel a certain secret satisfaction in asserting its power over a man who had exercised sovereign power. They were humiliating, in him, all commanders.

These feelings hidden at the bottom of one's heart, are rarely admitted, but those who suspect it cannot be deceived.

The Viceroy of French India was, after fifty years of service, condemned to death at the age of sixty-eight.

5th May 1766

When the judgment was pronounced, his anger equalled his amazement. He raged against his judges just as he had raged against his accusers, and stabbed himself near the heart with the compass with which he had drawn maps in the prison. The blow was not deep enough to kill him. Destined to lose his life at the scaffold, he was drawn through the streets in a tumbril of mud, by order of the judge-advocate. The big gag on his mouth, spreading over his lips and disfiguring his face, was a horrible sight. A sort of cruel curiosity always attracts a miscellaneous crowd of people to a spectacle like this. Many of his personal enemies, subordinate officers, came to enjoy it. He had been gagged because they feared that he would raise his voice against his judges on the scaffold, and because they were afraid that he would persuade the people of his innocence, since he believed in it so intensely himself. The tumbril and the gag raised the spirits of the whole of Paris: the death of an unfortunate did not revolt them.

6th May 1766

The judgment decreed that *Thomas Arthur Lalli was condemned to be beheaded, having been duly convicted of having betrayed the interests of King, the State and the India Company*, of abuse of authority, of oppressive acts and exactions.

We have already remarked elsewhere that these words *betrayed the interests* do not signify perfidy, formal treason, or a crime of *leze-majeste*—briefly, the sale of Pondicherry to the English—of which he had been accused. To betray the interests of somebody means to mismanage them, or to conduct them badly. It was obvious that during the whole trial, there was not a shadow of treason or peculation. The implacable enemy of the

English who had always attacked them would not sell the town to them. Moreover, the English would never have bought a town which they were sure of taking. Finally, Lalli would have enjoyed the fruit of his treachery in London without coming to court death in France among his enemies. With regard to the charges of embezzlement, as he was entrusted either with the money of the King, or with that of the Company, he could not be accused of a crime, which is said to be so common.

Abuse of authority, oppression, and exactions are also vague and equivocal terms by means of which there is no court which cannot condemn a General of the Army and a Marshal of France to death. There must be definite law, and definite proofs. General Lalli used his authority very badly, no doubt, when he swore at his officers, and was lacking in consideration, circumspection, and propriety, but, since there is no law which says: *Every Marshal of France, and every General who is a brute shall have his head cut off*, many impartial observers thought that it was the *Parlement* which appeared to be abusing its authority.

The word "exaction" is also a term without a definite meaning. Lalli had never levied a tax of a farthing either on the inhabitants of Pondicherry or on the Council. He never even demanded from the Treasurer of the Council the salary due to him as General: he was expecting to receive it at Paris, and all he received there was death.

We have the certain knowledge (as far as it is permissible to use the word "certain") that three days after his death, a respectable man, having asked one of the judges about which crime had caused the conviction, received the reply: "There is no particular crime: he has been condemned on the totality of his conduct." That was essentially true, but a hundred inconsistencies of conduct of a man of position, a hundred faults in his character, a hundred signs of bad temper, put all together, do not together make up a crime worthy of the final penalty. If it had been lawful to fight one's general, perhaps he deserved to die at the hands of the officers whom he had insulted, but not by the sword of justice which knows neither hate nor anger. It is certain that no military officers would have accused him so violently if they

had known that their complaints would lead him to the scaffold; on the contrary, they wuold have found excuses for him. Such is the character of French officers.

This judgment seems as cruel to-day as at the time when the suit took place. The Châtelet, which had been ordered by the king to punish the palpable embezzlements done in Canada by tbe clerks had only condemned them to restitution, fines and punishment. The Magistrates of the Châtelet had felt that, in the state of humiliation and despair to which France had fallen in those unfortunate times, when she had lost her troops, her ships, her money, her trade, her colonies, her reputation, they could not restore any of them to her by hanging ten or twelve guilty men who had not been paid by a government which was in debt, and who had, therefore, paid themselves. These accused men had no intrigue working against them. There was a bloodthirsty and terrible one against an Irishman who seemed to have been strange, fanciful, bad-tempered, jealous of other people, acting from selfish motives like everybody else, but, in spite of it all, not a thief—a brave man, devoted to the state and innocent. Time was necessary before pity could take the place of hatred. The tide did not turn in Lalli's favour until a few months afterwards when vengeance had been satiated, and justice and pity had again entered men's hearts.

The thing which contributed the most to re-establishing his memory with the people was the fact that, after a good deal of searching, it was found that he had only left a very ordinary fortune. The judgment had ordered that 100,000 crowns should be confiscated from his property and given to the poor of Pondicherry. Enough money to pay these debts was not found. The really interesting poor people were his relations. The King showed favours to them which did not make amends for the misfortune of the family. The biggest favour that they asked of was that, if possible, the case judged by the old *Parlement* should be re-tried by the new, or that a new Council of War should take it up with the help of magistrates.

Wise and compassionate people gradually began to realize that the condemnation of General Lalli was one of those murders

which are committed with the sword of justice. There is no civilized nation in which laws made to protect the innocent have not been used at times to oppress them. It is a misfortune that is inherent in human nature, which is weak, passionate and kind. Ever since the death of the Templers there has been no century in which the judges of France have not committed many of these murderous mistakes. Sometimes it was an absurd and barbarous law which caused these legal evils; sometimes it was a wise law that had been perverted.*

* The Duchess d'Ancre was accused of having sacrificed a white cock to the moon and was burned as a witch.

It was proved against the priest Ganfredy that he had frequent conferences with the devil. One of the strongest charges against Vanini was that they had found a great toad in his home, and therefore he was declared to be a sorcerer and an atheist.

The Jesuit Girard was accused of having bewitched la Cadier; the priest Grandier of having bewitched a whole convent.

The old *Parlement* forbade anyone to write against Aristotle under pain of being sent to the galleys.

Montecuculi, chamberlain and cup-bearer to the French Dauphin was condemned for being tempted by the Emperor Charles XV to poison the young prince, because he dabbled in Chemistry. Such examples of absurdity and barbarism are innumerable. Let us draw attention again to what we said before—that if the executions of most men in high position had been delayed, they would, with hardly one exception, never have been carried out. The reason is that human nature, which is so cruel when it is heated, comes back again to gentleness when it grows cool.

Chapter XX

The destruction of the French Company in India

THE death of Lalli did not revive the India Company : it was only a useless act of cruelty. If it is sad even to carry out necessary acts of this kind, how much more ought we to abstain from those which only cause neighbouring countries to say : " This nation once generous and powerful is now only dangerous for those who serve it."

It was, moreover, a big problem at the Court, in Paris, in the Maritime Provinces among the agents, and among the ministers whether they ought to support or abandon this corpse with two heads which had equally harmed trade and the war, and which to-day was made up of members who used to change daily. The ministers who tended towards the opinion that its monopoly should be taken away employed M. l'abbé Morrelet to write for them. He was in reality a Doctor of the Sorbonne University, but such a learned, intelligent and methodical man, that he was more fit to serve the State in serious matters than to lecture on the platforms of the University. He proved that in the position in which the Company found itself, it was not possible to let them retain a privilege which had ruined them.

He also wished to prove that this monopoly ought never to have been given to them. It was equivalent to saying that the French have in their character, and more often in their government, something which will not allow them to form successful associations on a big scale, because the English, Dutch, and even Danish Companies had prospered with their exclusive privilege. It was proved that the different ministries from 1725 to 1769 had furnished the India Company, at the expense of the King and the State, with the amazing sum of three hundred and seventy-six millions, without ever being able to pay its

shareholders any interest. This fact cannot be sufficiently stressed.

Finally, they laid the ghost of this Company which had aroused such big hopes. It had not been able to succeed through the care of Cardinal Richelieu nor through the generosity of Louis XIV, of the Duke of Orleans, or of any of the ministers of Louis XV. A hundred millions were necessary to give it new life, and there would have been again danger of the Company losing them. The shareholders and the investors continued to be paid through the farming out of the Tobacco trade, so that if tobacco went out of fashion, bankruptcy would be inevitable.

The English Company, better managed, better aided by the Fleet which commanded the seas, and inspired by a more patroitic spirit, was at the height of her power and glory (which may be transitory). It also had quarrels with shareholders and with the Government, but these quarrels were the quarrels of conquerors who cannot agree when they share the booty. Those of the French Company were the complaints and the crying of the vanquished, accusing one another of their misfortunes in the midst of the ruin around them.

In the English Parliament, they tried to seize from Lord Clive and his officers the enormous riches they acquired in their victories. They claimed that everything ought to belong to the State and not to individuals, just as the *Parlement* of Paris had done. But the difference between the English Parliament and that in Paris was immense, in spite of the similarity of name ; one represented the whole nation, the other was just a judicial tribunal, whose work was to register the edicts of the King. The English Parliament decided on the twenty-fourth of May, 1773

> *that it was shameful to demand in London from Lord Clive and his brave officers the legitimate reward of their fine deeds in India ; that this act would be as unjust as if they had wanted to punish Admiral Anson for having made a tour of the world as a conqueror ; and, finally, that the most certain method of encouraging men to serve their country was to let them work at the same time for themselves.*

Thus there was a huge difference between the fate of Clive, the Englishman, and that of Lalli, the Irishman: but one was the victor, the other the vanquished; one had made himself loved, and the other had made himself hated.

Only time can teach posterity what will happen to the English Company........whether it will establish its power in Bengal and on the Coromandel coast as the Dutch have done in Batavia, or whether the Mahrattas and the Pathans prove too warlike for them and prevail, whether England will dominate India as it is dominating North America. All that we know for certain at the present time is that everything changes on this earth.